

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 12 December 2023

Present:	Cllr Nicola White (Chair)	Cllr John Meischke (Vice-Chair)
	Cllr Michael Brooks	Cllr Annabel Kirk
	Cllr Catherine Hammon (after at 19.27)	Cllr Richard Lewis
	Cllr Mark Richardson (after 19:20)	Cllr Darren Appleby (after 20.10)
	Clerk: Jane Allsop	
	County Cllr Ken Crofton, District Cllr Joe Thomas	

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies: Cllrs Emma Waltham and Clive Bell.

2. Public participation

None.

3. Chair'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 Tuesday 14 November 2023**

Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved and signed.

b) Review of actions

1. Look at the drainage pipework outside Newmans Court

Cllr Kirk said she had inspected the drainage pipework outside Newmans Court and there is realistically little that can be done without major work. She has asked Adam Welch to clear any debris that has come from the flowerbeds when he is attending to them.

2. Repair Junior football goalpost net again

This item is covered under 8 a, Community Hall Trustees

3. Send updated village directory to all Parish Councillors

All Parish Councillors have been emailed the amended village directory, as updated by Cllr Brooks.

Cllr Brooks said there were several outstanding items, which are highlighted on this document and asked Parish Councillors to email him any amendments they are aware of.

Action: Parish Councillors

Cllr Meischke questioned commercial enterprises being listed in the village directory. It was agreed to post a notice on Facebook to gauge interest from local companies.

Action: B. Brooks

4. Obtain more information about High Street bench near the Great Innings roundabout

The Clerk said that she had now spoken to a member of Paddy Cullen's family about the location of his memorial seat. The family have pressure washed this wooden bench. However, Cllr Kirk said that it was already getting splattered with bird poo again.

It was agreed that the Parish Council should pursue the idea of having a cover made to go over the bench and incorporate a notice board within it. Cllr Lewis said that a notice board at this location will become more important when the Fairview and Woodhall estate developments have been built.

It was agreed to include this item under the Environment Committee.

Agenda: Env/01.2024

5. Document the strategy for a publicity objective

Cllr Lewis will create a draft document to capture the objectives of Publicity and News Dissemination for the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council.

Action: R. Lewis

6. Obtain quotations, for budget purposes, to repaint the Community Hall perimeter wall

This item is covered under 8 a, Community Hall Trustees.

7. Arrange dates for the annual boiler service and electrical testing

This item is covered under 8 a, Community Hall Trustees.

8. Ask Mark Blacktin to provide a like-for-like quotation for the repair of the Lammas steps

This item is covered under 8 a, Environment Committee.

9. Inspect wooden trim trail item

This item is covered under 8 a, Community Hall Trustees.

10. Monitor dog fouling in the High Street near Mill Lane

Parish Councillors agreed that dog fouling has become worse over the last month. District Cllr Joe Thomas agreed to source some suitable posters for uploading to Facebook and placing on the dog waste bins.

Action: J. Thomas

11. Look at East Herts air quality consultation

Cllr White said that Cllr Waltham looked at the consultation document and will not be taking this forward as it does not include our region.

12. Speak to Charles Clark re School Admissions consultation

Cllr White said she spoke to Charles Clark re concerns about school admissions. He said that Watton-at-Stone only need to be concerned if the catchment areas change.

13. Speak to Scout & Guide Group re wooden benches

Cllr Richardson said he spoke to one of the Scout Group helpers, Kaine Joel, who gave him the contact details for Peter Knight and Malcolm Oxley. Cllr Meischke suggested that he contact Richard Wing, Scout Group Leader in the first instance.

Action: M. Richardson

c) Action Points resolved

1. Send a copy of Cllr Kirk's bus survey to Presdales and Chauncy schools
2. Pass on bus data to Cllr Kirk
3. Give Parish Council trophy to Clerk for engraving and find out name of Beaver recipient for 2023
4. Arrange for the Santander and Nationwide change of bank signatory forms to be signed and returned
5. Obtain quotations from Mark Blacktin re removal of graffiti on teen shelter
6. Give Cllr Lewis the contact details for Tony Bradford
7. Send Clerk updated NP map for uploading to the Parish Council website
8. Change 'items for Parish News' heading to 'items for publicity'
9. Write to planning department re Home Farm Cottage application (3/23/2079/HH)
10. Request planning extension re application for Land at Walkern Road (3/23/2108/FUL)
11. Obtain additional quotations for front door & windows
12. Contact Headteacher at Watton School re parking in Rectory Lane
13. Report damaged salt bin at Perrywood Lane and bin that needs filling in Moorymead Close
14. Report corroded dog waste bin by War Memorial to EHDC
15. Inform War Memorial Hall Management committee that Cllr Hammon is their Parish Council representative
16. Write publicity article re the election of Cllr White as the new Parish Council Chair

6. Specific items**a) Neighbourhood plan**

Cllr Hammon said that she had not managed to gather the Steering Group to discuss the Fairview New Homes planning application and advise the Parish Council how to respond. She confirmed that she would continue to seek their collective views on the application. She commented that she would also check with the Steering Group whether they would be happy to continue to work with the Parish Council now that the work in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan was complete.

Cllr Hammon said she attended the Fairview public consultation on 23 November and jotted down some notes from the public attending that meeting, which in the main came from residents who live in both Walkern Road and Beane Road.

1. The residents were concerned about the speed that people come down the Walkern Road and into the village. If there is more continuity between the houses on the far side of the by-pass and the main part of the village, with Fairview's development filling the gap, the 30mph limit should start the far side of their houses, not by reference to the Walkern Road site.
2. There will need to be constraints on the size/weight of construction traffic coming over the old bridge.
3. The Fairview people said that the gate at the entrance to the development was to address concerns that non-residents would park there. They will open automatically and will not need any kind of key or pass. Pedestrian paths and entrance points will not be gated. Councillor Hammon noted that the gates go against the desire to ensure that the new development is well connected into the community.
4. Some residents asked whether there would be solar panels on the houses. The answer was no - there is only a 2% gain from installing them and they didn't want to burden people with the cost of maintaining them over time. Apparently, the development will hit its environmental requirements using heat exchange systems and underfloor heating.

5. Councillor Hammon asked about cable connectivity for superfast Wi-Fi for the new development. The Fairview representatives weren't able to answer but said if there was cable in the village, they would hope to connect to it. The Clerk has confirmed that she has cable in Beane Road.
6. Regarding the plans for planting/maintenance on the Stevenage Rd side, the rep said that they haven't written a full plan for the land yet since EHDC will change it anyway, so it's more cost effective to find out what EHDC wants and then to write the plan accordingly. The current plan (just planting "scrub") is the bare minimum to meet the biodiversity requirements for the application and is not expected to be the end position. Councillor Hammon noted the potential to push for a wetland planting scheme.

Cllr Joe Thomas said that EHDC are due to vote on ratifying the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan tomorrow night (Wednesday 13th December).

Cllr Hammon put together a letter to Thomas Abel Smith, which was sent by Cllr White, explaining the Parish Council's position about the prospect of football facilities being provided at the Woodhall Estate site by the A602/A119 roundabout. Cllr White said that since sending the letter, she had received an invitation to meet from Thomas Abel Smith. She asked if Cllr Hammon would also attend the meeting, and she agreed to do so.

Cllr White said, on behalf of all the new Parish Councillors, she was very impressed with all the work the Steering Group have done to put the Neighbourhood Plan together. Now the Neighbourhood Plan is complete, the Parish Council need to outline a plan on the way forward as the Steering Group gets disbanded and hoped that Cllrs Bell and Hammon would give their guidance in this process. Cllr Lewis said that if the Steering Group is disbanded, the natural place would be for the planning committee to take the lead.

b) Update on the 907-bus service

Cllr Kirk emailed all Parish Councillors her update on the 907-bus service.

She has sent the results of the bus survey to Dan Tancock (HCC) and asked him to confirm data on the number of passengers who are standing each day. She also asked for a follow up meeting to discuss the reliability of the bus service, seating and adjusting the current timetables so that pupils don't have to hang around for over half an hour, especially in winter or wet weather.

7. Planning

Cllr Lewis reported on the following applications.

a) Applications

i) 19 Walkern Road (3/23/1849/HH)

Creation of driveway and vehicular access way

This property currently has a shared access drive with three other properties and are at the end of the driveway.

Cllr Lewis said that he visited the neighbours on the righthand side of this property, who would benefit from this application as it would increase the size of their front garden.

Parish Councillors agreed a no comment response.

Action: J. Allsop

ii) Lane Croft Perrywood Lane (3/23/2251/PNHH)

Single storey rear extension: Depth 8.00 metres, Maximum height 2.68 metres, Eaves height 2.68 metres

Although the application has been submitted under permissive developments, Cllr Lewis agreed to visit the neighbouring properties to see if they have any comments and report back to the Parish Council.

Action: R. Lewis

- The Fairview New Homes planning application to be placed on the January 2024 agenda.

Agenda: 01/2024

Cllr Appleby arrived at the meeting.

b) Decisions

None.

8. Reports

a) Committees

Budget & Finance

Cllr Richardson reported on the following items.

- Monthly accounts

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council			
Petty Cash –		Petty cash – Payments	
None		None	
Payments			
J. Allsop	Plants for Lammas		107.00
Grassroots	War memorial Maintenance – October 2023		50.40
NCD Ground	Grass cutting work on sportsfield - October		120.00
Google	Google workspace - direct debit		13.80
Nicola White	SiteGround - 1-year website hosting for watton-pc.org.uk		201.46
Govresources Ltd	Neighbourhood Plan - consultation work		918.00
Castle Water	Water supply		58.40
Royal British	Poppy donation		80.00
Adam Welch	2nd - ½ year payment of scheduled works includes 1st leaf collection		1,600.00
J. Allsop	Dell monitor		185.00
Community Hall	Grant		5,720.00
Wages & Salaries	November salary		1,347.30
J. Allsop	2 cartridges for Laser printer		32.95
Grassroots	War memorial Maintenance – November 2023		50.40
			10,484.71
Receipts			
Santander	Interest		15.27
Watton Youth	Use of sportsfield facilities		1,000.00
11 Allotment	Allotment rent 2023/2024		418.00
Nationwide	Interest		134.73
			1,568.00
Watton-at-Stone Community Hall			
Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
Table Tennis – Main Hall	134.00	3 x 2024 diaries	15.27
Tony Silverstri – Pavilion – 3 weeks	60.00		15.27
Rosemary Brown – Pavilion &	63.00		
Archery – Main Hall	120.00		
Ben Talbot – donation for use of	15.00		
	392.00		
Payments			
Wages	November 2024		264.00
British Gas	Electricity		200.40
HMRC	VAT return - September		135.12
			599.52
Receipts			
Santander	Interest		15.25
Susan Scully	Pavilion hire		36.00
Ildiko Imre-Karda	Meeting room on 19.10.23		28.00
FWAG East	Pavilion hire on 08.11.23		45.00
Imagination	Main Hall or Pavilion		99.00
Maia Hobbs	2nd 50% for Saturday 18 Nov		28.50
Parish Council	Annual grant - Paid into Com Hall Fund account		5,720.00
Janine Gildersleve	Main Hall		147.25
Cavendish	Pavilion hire on 23.11.23		70.00
Begona Garcia	Meeting room on 27.11.23, 04.12 & 11.12.23		22.80
David Bramley	Main Hall		15.00
			6,226.80

Parish Councillors approved the payments.

- **Report & Approval of minutes of Budget & Finance Sub-Committee meeting held on 16.11.2023**
 Prior to this meeting, all Parish Councillors were e-mailed copies of the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee minutes together with associated paperwork relating to the budgets for 2024/25.
 Parish Councillors approved the minutes and recommendations contained in the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee minutes dated 16 November 2023. Cllr Richardson to sign the minutes. **Action: M. Richardson**
 The following quotations, which are detailed in the minutes of the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee meeting dated 16 November, were accepted.

 - **NCD Ground Maintenance Services:** quote dated 15 October 2023 for Sportsfield grass cutting, flowerbed and grass cutting work around the perimeter of the sportsfield, Community Hall, tennis courts, bike ramps and seating areas etc.
 - **Stanley Agricultural:** quote dated 13 November 2023 for Grass cutting the Lammas & Watton Green. Hedge cutting the Sportsfield & Church Walk.
 - **Greenwood Tree Care:** (Adam Welch) three-year quote dated 25th September 2023 for High Street maintenance work, mowing and strimming.
 If EHDC clear leaves as requested this winter, the Parish Council can then decide if they need to accept Adam Welch's leaf clearance part of his quotation or not.
 - **Grassroots:** quote dated 9 November 2023 for War Memorial Garden maintenance.
 The contractors to be notified accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**
 - **Community Hall hire charges**
 The Trustees to review the Community Hall hourly rates and compare them to other halls in the area. **Action: Trustees**
 - **Sports Clubs hire-charge**
 The annual hire charges the Cricket, Tennis and Youth Football Club to be increased by 10% for the year 2024/25. The Clubs to be notified accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**
 - **Allotment rental charges**
 It was agreed at the Budget & Finance Committee meeting that, to establish more precisely how much to charge the allotment holders, we need to compare rental charges at other allotment sites in East Herts, to ensure that we are not under or over charging.
 The Clerk has already obtained several prices which are based on pole measurements (a full allotment plot is normally 10 poles. One pole is an area 5.5 yards' x 5.5 yards). As the Watton-at-Stone allotments are all irregular sizes, an average half and full plot size needs to be agreed to base charges on. Cllr Kirk agreed to measure some of the plots and Cllr Lewis offered to assist her. **Action: A. Kirk/R. Lewis**
 - **Employees and self-employed remuneration**
 The Parish Council agreed the recommendations of the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee for Debi Lee's litterpicking and cleaning hourly rates.
 - **Budget 2024/25**
 Clerk Richardson went through the main items in the draft budget and after discussion, Parish Councillors provisionally approved the draft budget figures for 2024/2025.
 - **Precept 2024/25**
 Parish Councillors provisionally approved the annual precept requirements for 2024/25 of £46,165, which is an increase of 8.5%.
 Cllr Richardson said that the 2024/25 budget notes need amending as the precept figure is incorrect. Once amended, the budget notes to be emailed to all Parish Councillors. **Action: J. Allsop**
 - **Approval and signing of Precept forms for 2024/25**
 The Parish Council will formally agree the precept figure at their meeting in January 2024 and sign the precept form. This item to be placed on the January 2024 agenda. **Agenda: 01/2024**
 - **Allotment public liability insurance renewal**
 The Parish Council has always paid for the Allotment & Garden Association's annual public liability insurance cover because their own policy won't cover them. David Wilkinson (Treasurer, Allotment and Garden Association) has emailed two quotations for their 2024 public liability insurance cover, the costs are as follows:
 - Current insurers BHIB (who are now known as Clear Affinities Group) came in at **£213.00**.
 - BGi UK (their former insurers up to 2020) came in at **£105.07**.
 The Parish Council approved renewal of the BGi UK quote. The Clerk to notify David Wilkinson **Action: J. Allsop**
 - **CDA for Herts - annual membership renewal**
 It was agreed to renew the annual membership and invite CDA for Herts representatives to attend a meeting of the Parish Council. **Action: J. Allsop**

Community Hall Trustees

Cllrs Lewis and Meischke reported on the following items.

- **Hall front Windows & Door**

Additional quotations are being obtained. A second quotation has come in at 2/3 of the cost of the first one.
This item will be discussed at the next meeting of the Community Hall Trustees. **Agenda: Trustees**
- **Hall top windows**

The high-level windows have never been repainted and have only had glass panes replaced with toughened plastic ones when they have been broken due to vandalism. The window frames are currently not in a good condition.
Mark Blacktin has agreed to supply a quotation for the work required.
This item will be discussed at the next meeting of the Community Hall Trustees. **Agenda: Trustees**
- **Outside toilet door**

Mark Blacktin is supplying a quotation for the repair of the damaged outside toilet door.
This item will be discussed at the next meeting of the Community Hall Trustees. **Agenda: Trustees**
- **Perimeter wall**

Quotations are being obtained to repaint the perimeter wall.
This item will be discussed at the next meeting of the Community Hall Trustees. **Agenda: Trustees**
- **Play area repairs**

The small bolt missing on the swings will be replaced within the next few days.
The sign that was hanging has been repaired.
The Wicksteed Leisure see-saw, which was installed two years ago, needs repairing. Cllr Meischke has contacted the suppliers who are yet to respond. Cllr Meischke to chase. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Junior football net**

Cllr Meischke has repaired the junior football net again.
- **Boiler service & Electrical tests**

The Boiler service and electric tests have been booked for February.
- **Update on football usage**

Cllr White said that the Parish Council now have confirmation on the Youth Football's exclusive use of the football pitch for this season 2023/2024. Any request from other teams will have to go through Youth Football first and the Parish Council/Community Hall Trustees will charge for the extra use. The Parish Council reserves the right to cancel usage of the pitch if they feel it is too wet to play on.
For next season (2024/25) the Parish Council and Community Hall Trustees will need to get all the football teams together to agree the pitches usage.
A copy of the Youth Football teams insurance policy to be requested from Derek Hill, to ensure that they have appropriate cover. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Caretaker role**

Cllr Meischke will take over his role as caretaker of the Community Hall on 13 December, when he will no longer be a Parish Councillor or Community Hall Trustee.

Environment Committee

Cllr Kirk e-mailed her Environment Committee report to Parish Councillors prior to this meeting.

- **Allotments:**

I have spoken to the owner of the plot on which the cherry tree stands. Although she likes the tree, she understands the need to remove it and likes the idea of planting something elsewhere to replace it.
Adam has quoted £290 to remove the cherry tree. Parish Council approved that the quote. Cllr Kirk to notify Adam Welch accordingly. **Action: A. Kirk**
- **The Lammas**
 - **Steps on bank**

Cllr Kirk is awaiting a like-for-like quotation from Mark Blacktin to repair the Lammas steps and will chase him if necessary. **Action: A. Kirk**
 - **Planting on riverbank opposite Mr & Mrs McPherson**

Mike Smith has prepared the ground for planting. Cllr Kirk said she will be assisting him with the planting of the new shrubs this coming weekend. All Parish Councillors and their children are welcome.

- **Rectory Lane – grass verges**

Cllr Kirk said that Cllr Joe Thomas is pursuing the damage to the Rectory Lane grass verge with EHDC. Cllr Thomas said that EHDC would be looking at this in the new year as they are currently dealing with other issues they are responsible for.

Vehicles parking on the EHDC grassed land, cause the grass to be churned up and has created large muddy areas. When it rains large puddles of water now form on the road at the entrance to Rectory Lane.

- **Tree overhanging School Lane**

As the overhanging tree, on Parish Council land, is just inside the conservation area, an application was submitted to EHDC for permission to cut it back. EHDC informed us that unless we heard to the contrary by 12 December, we could proceed with the tree work outlined in our application. As no notification has been received, the Parish Council can now obtain quotations from Tree Smiths and Oakleaf Solutions (Michael Oakman). Greenwood Tree Care (Adam Welch) does not wish to quote for this work.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Japanese knotweed encroachment onto Cottage site**

Cllr White said that there had been no response from the owners of the Crowbury re their Japanese knotweed encroachment onto the Cottage site. She will therefore be asking PCSO Sally Brooks to contact the owners directly, as this is a prosecutable offence. She said that she hoped PCSO Brooks would persuade the owners of the Crowbury to engage with the Parish Council.

Action: N. White

- **High Street traffic issues, including Bus Stop outside the Bull public house**

Cllr White said that the new bus stop has been installed outside the Bull Public house. A lack of coordination meant the work to the kerbside and pavement was completed and the following day the pavement was dug up again to allow an electric supply to the bus stop sign post.

Cllr White said that she would arrange for the High Street Working Group to regroup again soon.

Action: N. White

- **Grants for tree planting on the Cottage site and the Lammas**

Tony Bradford has been in touch with the Parish Council about applying for an HCC grant for tree saplings on both the Cottage Site (which he manages on our behalf) and the Lammas. The application would be for 100 saplings for the cottage site and 50 for the Lammas and would include canes and protection guards. The saplings will be between 45 and 80 cm in height.

Parish Councillors unanimously agreed to ask Tony Bradford to proceed with the grant application.

Action: A. Kirk/J. Allsop

Cllr Kirk said that if successful, the Lammas tree application can be used to replace the cherry tree. The Ramblers association would also like to plant a tree in memory of one of the members who died last year. One of the saplings could be used for this purpose.

- **Land for a Community Orchard**

No further update has been received from HCC, re the use of the land at the back of the Gatekeeper development that backs onto Church Lane.

Cllr Thomas confirmed that following completion of the Gatekeeper development, the land had belonged to EHDC, but they had transferred it over to HCC with the section 106 funding attached to it for maintenance.

Cllr Crofton said that little maintenance work had been done to the site. Cllr Thomas said he would find out how much money was transferred to HCC.

Action: J. Thomas

If the Parish Council are to use some of the land for a community orchard, they could maintain all the plot and have the S106 funds transferred over to them.

- **Surface water flooding along High Street due to drainage problems**

No further update.

- **War Memorial**

Cllr Meischke said that the War Memorial has a slight tilt towards the road. Parish Councillors have previously taken measurements to assess if the tilt has increased or not. These needs doing again.

Cllr Meischke agreed to show Cllr Lewis how to take these measurements.

Action: J. Meischke/R. Lewis

- **Tree Policy**

Cllr Lewis said that he had started investigating tree policies and there are many examples on the web with a high level of councils having them. In putting together his first draft, he will be using wording that already exists and will send his draft to members of the Environment Committee for comment in the first instance.

b) Routine Reports

i) Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests

Cllr Meischke confirmed that he had carried-out the emergency escape lighting and manual alarm call tests in the last month. He also inspected the hall regularly including running the water every 2-3 weeks to prevent the risk of legionnaires disease.

This item to be deleted from future agendas as it will now be covered under Caretaker's duties.

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.

This item to be deleted from future agendas as it will now be covered under Caretaker's duties.

iii) Weekly reports - Fire Inspection and shower tests

Done. This item to be deleted from future agendas as it will now be covered under Caretaker's duties.

iv) Monthly village-report

Cllr White completed the report on 11 & 12 December. The main points identified in the report are highlighted below.

- **Sports field:** wet but holding up well despite heavy rain over a long period.
- **Small swings:** repair required.
- **Palace fortress:** Needs new grips on rock wall in the not-too-distant future.
- **See saw:** Sideways movement – needs new centre pin.
- **Supernova:** bearings starting to go.
- **Teen shelter:** awaiting removal of graffiti.
- **Trim trail:** OK but needs jet wash to remove slippery surface on sit up bench.
- **Railings to School Lane:** looking shabby.
- **Allotment:** Considering the time of the year, the area looks in reasonable condition.
- **Mill lane culvert** – litter in culvert.
- **Salt Bins**

- **Moorymead Close:** one at end of Moorymead needs topping up. Inform Highways faults.

Action: J. Allsop

- **New bin at top of Great Innings outside playground:** Parish Councillors thanked Cllr Crofton for financing the installation of this salt bin.

Cllr White to add the above item to the monthly village-report template.

Action: N. White

- **War Memorial:** needs assessments on lean

Action: J. Meischke/R. Lewis

- **Area near Ornate village sign:** a lot of leaves on the pathways.

Report to EHDC.

Action: J. Allsop

- **January monthly village report**

Cllrs Appleby and Lewis will complete the January monthly-village report.

Action: D. Appleby/R. Lewis

v) Weekly sportsfield-report

Nothing to report.

This item to be deleted from future agendas as it will now be covered under Caretaker's duties.

vi) 6-monthly report

Cllrs White and Meischke completed the report on 12 December 2023. All Parish Councillors to be e-mailed a copy of the report.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Tennis courts**

- **Tennis nets:** Players do not let down nets after play. Should we ask Tennis Club for a notice/awareness.

- **Boundary:** ball containers left, and leaves require picking up.

- **General comment:** Brush cleaner next to court entrance is leaning. It is not loose.

- **Play area on sportsfield**

- **See-saw:** pivot worn, sideways movement.

- **Swing:** Repair required to back post of small swing seat.

- **Supernova:** worn bearings.

- **Safety surface:** damage in front of small swings again.

- **Palace fortress:** worn grabs on rock wall climb.

- **Trip hazards:** surface gaps. Either fill or let grass grow.

- **Community Hall**

- **Pavilion:** not checked as it was in use.

- **Main Hall:** bench coverings need replacing.

- **External toilet:** repair to door planned.

- **Kitchen:** kettles need replacing – one leaking and one with damaged lid.

It was agreed to replace both kettles.

Action: N. White/J. Allsop

- **Bench seats**
 - **High Street/Great Innings roundabout:** consider refurb – clean (this has now been pressure washed by the family of this memorial seat) we
 - **High Street near bus stop:** consider refurb / shelter
 - **High Street near Mill Lane:** consider refurb.
 - **Station Road opposite junction with Rectory Lane:** consider refurb.
 - **Station Road just after car park entrance to Watton Place clinic** consider refurb.
- vii) **Weekly defibrillator inspection**
Cllr Hammon continues to do regular defibrillator checks.
- viii) **Website/Facebook – feedback**
This item to be deleted as it is now covered under item 12 – Items for publicity.
- ix) **Highway issues**
Nothing to report.
- x) **Dog fouling reports**
Parish Councillors agreed that there had been a significant increase in dog fouling in the last month throughout the village. They discussed various ways to help encourage owners to pick up their dog waste. Cllr Thomas agreed to find some stickers that could be put on dog bins encouraging owners to dispose of their dog waste. Action: J. Thomas
- xi) **Police reports**
PCSO Karen Broad from the Neighbourhood Team emailed the A6 Crime Reports for November 2023. Watton-at-Stone had one item identified in this report.

9. Correspondence received

- a) **Email from Ken Crofton re the funding for dropped kerbs in the High Street**
Following a request from disabled residents in both the High Street and Motts Close, Cllr Crofton was happy to report that he had now managed to find some funding to install two dropped kerbs either side of the layby outside 22 and 24 High Street.
He said he had cancelled some other work so that this project could go ahead. He hoped that the work would be completed before the end of March 2024.
Cllr Crofton's had original requested that the Parish Council fund this project, however Parish Councillors had discussed the issue via email and decided that it was not appropriate for them to do so.
Parish Councillors thanked Cllr Crofton for his flexibility in supporting our residents on this occasion.
- b) **Ramblers Association – request to plant a tree**
Refer to final paragraph under item 8 a, Environment Committee - Grants for tree planting on the Cottage site and the Lammas.

10. Reports from other organisations

- **War Memorial Hall Management Committee**
Cllr Hammon said that the War Memorial Hall management committee has held their AGM and she had been emailed a copy of their report. The hall is being well used.
Pam Filer, who has been treasurer for 35 years, is hoping to stand down as soon as someone else can be found to replace her.

11. Items for publicity

The following item was identified for inclusion on Facebook and the Watton-at-Stone website. Items for the Parish News will be discussed at the January Parish Council meeting as they don't publish in that month.

Resignation of Cllr. John Meischke.

Action: J. Allsop

Resignation of Cllr. John Meischke

Cllr. White thanked Cllr. Meischke for his years of service to our Village and our community. We have known of his planned retirement from the Council for some time, but now it is here, we will certainly miss him. He has been an outstanding Councillor for almost 30 years, representing and helping many of us individually, however, it is his commitment to our Community Hall and the sporting facilities for the village that are exceptional. He has held various roles over his time in the Council, Chairman, Vice Chair and Chairman of the Trustees. We are eternally grateful for his service and steadfast commitment to the team and our beautiful village of Watton at Stone.

Parish Councillors present at the meeting joined Cllr. White in thanking Cllr Meischke, he will be missed!.

Meeting closed: 21.40.

The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 9 January 2024.