

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the

Community Hall on Tuesday 9 April 2024

<b>Present:</b>	Cllr Nicola White (Chair)	Cllr Richard Lewis (Vice-Chair)
	Cllr Darren Appleby	Cllr Michael Brooks
	Cllr Annabel Kirk	Cllr Catherine Hammon
	Cllr Mark Richardson	Clerk: Abigail Brown
	District Cllr Joe Thomas	
<b>Members of public</b>	None	

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies: Cllrs Emma Waltham (on leave of absence)

**2. Public participation**

None

**3. Chair's/Clerk's Report**

- Rat bait for allotment
- Fairview amended planning application has been submitted post agenda to be discussed under Neighbourhood Plan section
- Vandalism - There have been two incidents in the last 2 weeks. It has not been caught on camera and was discovered after the vandalism had taken place. Cllr Nicola White will speak with PC Sally Brooks to report this series of vandalism. It was suggested that a post should be raised on 'Spotted in Watton' to advise the parish that this vandalism is taking place and is costing the Parish money which could be better spent elsewhere. The Clerk will put a post up on Facebook and 'Spotted In Watton' after Cllr Nicola White has spoken with PC Sally Brooks

**Action: N. White/A. Brown**

Leon Debrune has published a new leaflet that OWL is now being replaced by Herts Connect. It advises that CCTV is in working operation as there is a high level of theft from sports clubs etc. Cllr Richard Lewis will advise Tennis and Cricket Club to remain vigilant  
Cllr Nicola White will send the link to councillors for the new OWL community system

**Action: R. Lewis**

**Action: N. White**

- Grass cutting – The cricket club would like the grass cut before each home match. The grass at the side of the hall also needs to be cut as it is quite overgrown.

**Action: A. Brown**

**4. Parish Councillor Co-option** (Postponed to May Meeting)

District Cllr Joe Thomas has volunteered to become a Councillor. There are two vacancies and there will need to be a vote in May to decide which interested parties would like to be voted in. Cllr Nicola White will speak to potential candidates to meet and discuss their applications.

**Action: N. White**

**5. Declaration of Interests**

None

**6. Minutes of the last meeting**

**a) Acceptance**

- Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2024 were accepted and signed

## b) Review of actions

1. **Update Standing orders** N. White
2. **Progress Village Fête Parish Cllr engagement**  
Ideas have been discussed as to what we can do and Cllr Nicola White will feedback ideas  
Parish Councillors
3. **List keyholder and which keys they hold**  
There will be a draft list put together and shared by Abi Brown A. Brown
4. **Arrange zoom meeting with Steering Group regarding revised Walkern Rd site plans**  
Will arrange for week commencing 15<sup>th</sup> April C. Hammon
5. **Liaise with Neighbourhood Plan consultant Jacqueline Veater regarding any outstanding work**  
Complete – Loan has been paid back and new loan needs to be applied for C. Hammon
6. **Contact Ken Crofton regarding D-Day celebrations**  
Complete – Cllr Nicola White spoke with Cllr Ken Crofton and there are D-Day celebrations organised N. White
7. **Clerk to confirm and amend Santander bank signatories**  
Complete - Forms have been submitted J. Allsop
8. **Clerk to arrange Parish Council accounts for year ending 31 March 2024** A. Brown
9. **Clerk to arrange Community Hall accounts for year ending 31 March 2024** A. Brown
10. **Replace boot brush on scraper by the Community Hall**  
John Meischke will be fitting when the weather has improved J. Meischke
11. **Barrier at the back of the tennis courts to be removed when weather improves**  
Cllr Richard Lewis has arranged a meeting with Becky Hall to discuss J. Meischke/R.Lewis
12. **Contact Tennis Club regarding leaves at rear of Tennis Court**  
Complete R. Lewis
13. **Speak with Tony Bradford about extra hedging along Church Lane and overflowing ditch**  
Cllr Annabel Kirk has arranged a meeting with Tony Bradford A. Kirk
14. **Investigate plans to develop land earmarked for doctors surgery on Gatekeepers Meadow estate**  
Complete - Will wait to hear from Doctors as to what they would like to do with the land A. Kirk
15. **Notification of new Clerk**  
Complete N. White

## 7. Specific items

### a) Neighbourhood plan

Cllr Catherine Hammon has had a very good response from Fairview and they have responded very positively and made changes that were requested. The only subject which was not as positive was the bridge design. They will continue to push with the environment agency to improve this but it is unlikely and is felt that this may need to be accepted. There will be issues with wheelchairs and pushchairs as they will not be able to use the bridge. District Cllr Joe Thomas has opened up a dialogue with the East Herts District council as there are also issues with a dropped curb and accessibility. It was also requested that there would be Virgin Media cables implemented.

Section 106 – Fairview understood the Parish Council’s perspective and seemed amenable. District Cllr Joe Thomas advised that there have been funds earmarked by HTCC for sports, childcare and other activities which the village may be able to access.

Deadline for consultation comments for revised consultation, including bridge and paving, is on the 26<sup>th</sup> April and so Cllr Catherine Hammon will be putting a response together and will arrange a meeting with the Steering Committee to create a response for planning and section 106. On Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May the consultation will be discussed at the Development Management

Committee at Warfields in Hertford at 7pm.

**b) Appointment of new Clerk**

Abigail Brown has been appointed as the new clerk as of 29<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**c) Village Fete stand**

Cllr Nicola White will circulate ideas for both village fete and the D-Day celebrations

**d) D-day celebrations**

Cllr Nicola White will circulate ideas for both village fete and the D-Day celebrations

**e) Ferret Licence approval**

Approved. Abi Brown to issue new licence and speak with owner of ferrets about possibilities of running ferrets in the allotments for rat infestation **Action: A. Brown**

**f) Land access for Cottage site**

Approved. Abi Brown to issue new agreement **Action: A. Brown**

**8. Planning**

**a) Application**

**i. Land Adj The Willows Perrywood Lane Watton At Stone SG14 3RB (3/24/0621/FUL)**

Demolition of buildings, Erection of 2, five bedroomed dwellings with integral garages and air source heat pumps, landscaping and associated works.

This is the second time permission has been requested. It is an unused, brown field site. The Parish Council previously entered a 'no comment' for the last request for planning permission. Cllr Richard Lewis will speak with the neighbours and if there are no disapprovals then will submit a 'no comment'.

District Cllr Joe Thomas mentioned that this is on greenbelt land and some comments given to councillors have included that the proposed buildings are larger than what was initially intended. It was felt that this would be an improvement on the dilapidated land that is currently there. Cllr Richard Lewis will also make reference to Neighbourhood plan quote. **Action: R. Lewis**

**ii. 1 Glebe Close (3/24/0546/HH)**

Raising of flat roofs to single storey rear extensions and insertion of 5 rooflights and alterations to fenestration to rear and flank elevations

A 'no comment' will be provided as this work is seen as suitable.

There have been further applications post the agenda being published. Cllr Richard Lewis will review and if comments are required prior to the next Parish meeting he will circulate to councillors.

**b) Decisions**

**i. 11A Beane Road Watton At Stone Hertfordshire SG14 3RG (3/23/2130/CLPO)**

Proposed single storey side extension **EHDC -Permission granted**

**ii. Lane Croft Perrywood Lane Watton At Stone Hertfordshire SG14 3RB (3/23/2251/PNHH)**

Single storey rear extension **EHDC -Permission granted**

## iii. 35 Moorymead Close Watton At Stone Hertfordshire SG14 3HF (3/24/0095/HH)

Retrospective application for the conversion of garage to habitable room

EHDC -Permission granted

## 8. Reports

## a) Teams

- Budget & Finance

## March Accounts

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council			
Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty cash – Payments	
		Amazon - laminating pouches	8.99
		J. Allsop – mobile phone	11.00
		BT phone calls to 28 March 2024	25.01
			<b>45.00</b>
Payments			
Google	Google workspace - direct debit		13.80
Tree Smiths	work to trees/hedge in School Lane		660.00
Victoria Dover	Gratia payment		550.00
HMRC	Tax & Ni for the Clerk - January - March		999.84
Antion Norden	Return of payment made in error re Allotments rent		17.50
J. Allsop	March 2024 salary		1,395.46
Bidwells	Sportsfield		125.00
J. Allsop	Archival quality paper for minutes - 500 sheets		33.75
J. Allsop	BT phone bill dated 28.02.24		23.96
Groundwork Trust	return of unused grant towards NP		510.00
Adam Welch	Leaf clearance payment		150.00
Debi Lee	35 hours litter pick @ £11 per hour		385.00
			<b>4,864.31</b>
Receipts			
Antander	Interest		14.29
Anna Chambers	Allotment rent + deposit 2023/2024		94.00
HMRC	VAT rebate 03.23-02.24		4,678.58
Grace Bishop	Allotment rent + deposit 2023/2024		72.00
			<b>4,858.87</b>
Watton-at-Stone Community Hall			
Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
Tony Silvestri – Pavilion x 4	60.00	B & Q - Toilet seat	22.00
Archery - Main Hall	140.00		22.00
Floodlighting - Donations	80.00		
Luncheon Club – PAT testing	14.40		
Luncheon Club - Pavilion	45.00		
Watton Woollies - Pavilion	63.00		
Mark Blacktin - Main Hall x 4	44.00		
Table Tennis - Main Hall	164.00		
	<b>610.40</b>		
Payments			
Debi Lee	23 hours cleaning @ £11 per hour		253.00
British Gas	Electricity		274.36
HMRC	VAT return - January		64.13
D. P Electrics	annual emergency light and PAT test		216.00
Castle Water	water supply		48.34
British Gas	Gas		247.95
John Meischke	Caretaker duties - 19 x £15		285.00
Sports Courts	Moss kill & pressure wash 3 x tennis courts		1,410.00
HCC	cleaning materials		58.98
James A Turner	Annual service 2 x combi boilers		255.60
RVTV	CCTV - call out		228.00
Debi Lee	23 hours cleaning @ £11 per hour		330.00
Kompan	replacement part for toddler swing		235.66

		<b>3,907.02</b>
<b>Receipts</b>		
Santander	Interest	19.02
EHDC	Pavilion hire for referendum	160.00
Watton House	Meeting room	12.00
Ildiko Imre-Karda	Meeting room on 21.03.24	28.00
Louise White	Pavilion hire 2nd payment for 9.03.24	18.00
Bob Thompson	meeting room on 14.03.24	12.00
Post Office	Cash deposit	14.40
Post Office	Cash deposit	80.00
Talbott Fitness	use of CH facilities Sept to Dec 2023	228.00
Janine Gildersleve (Bounce)	Main Hall -February + PAT testing 2024	206.53
Linda Goodchild	For friends of Watton re hall hire on 29.03.24	123.50
		<b>901.45</b>

12-monthly statement of accounts for the Parish Council and Community Hall for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

**Parish Council Year End Accounts**

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Accounts

Year end 31st March 2024

2023/2024		Year		Q4 - January to March 2023									Comment
		Budget	Year to Date	% of budget	Q1	Q2	Q3	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q4		
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>													
<b>Parks &amp; Open Spaces</b>													
- Sportsfield	Hedges	800	790	98.8%	0	120	670	0	0	0	0	0	<b>ALL FIGURES EXCLUDE VAT, VAT expenditure under Admin</b> £120 Adam trimming School Lane hedge, £870 Stanley hedge cutting Nick Darter - grass contractors first year and he didn't look at what he quoted for and has been overgenerous on his grass cutting and outer pitch cutting - John has now spoken to him about it Goal mouth work by Nick Darter should only be 2 payments in a year, but paid 3. In 2022/2023 only paid 1 £762.86 - full years rent, £242.14 = water charges £190 cut back nettles and lime trees, £400 scheduled maintenance work by Adam Welch and £150 grass cutting by Stanley Agricultural. £105.07 allotment insurance work done by Stanley Agricultural, £32.73 plumbing part for water system £450 - work to trees on Watton Green overhanging 'The Brambles', £89 plants for Lammass riverbank, £290 cut down cherry tree 1/2 year maintenance work done by Adam Grassroots, extra £205 for planting due to plants dying in winter 2022/23
- Sportsfield	Grass	2500	4,340	173.6%	1,690	2,250	400	0	0	0	0	0	
- Sportsfield	Playground inspection	220	106	48.3%	0	0	106	0	0	0	0	0	
- Sportsfield	Sportsfield Maintenance	800	1,898	238.0%	0	610	1,270	0	8	0	8	0	
- Glebe Rent	Sportsfield	250	375	150.0%	125	0	125	0	0	125	0	0	
- Glebe Rent	Allotments (including water charges)	1120	1,005	89.7%	381	175	448	0	0	0	0	0	
- Allotments (maintenance & insurance)		900	878	97.5%	0	390	350	138	0	0	0	138	
- Lammass & Watton Green Management		2000	1,870	93.5%	0	0	1,870	0	0	0	0	0	
- Land Management - general		1000	1,379	137.9%	0	450	89	290	0	550	840	0	
- Notice boards		50	-	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
- Seats - maintenance		100	-	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
- Pumps / High Street flowerbeds / PC land		2700	2,500	92.6%	0	1,250	1,250	0	0	0	0	0	
- War Memorial Maintenance		450	626	139.0%	168	126	332	0	0	0	0	0	
- Misc		0	-	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
- Misc		0	-	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>12890</b>	<b>15,757</b>	<b>122.2%</b>	<b>2,364</b>	<b>5,371</b>	<b>6,910</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>675</b>	<b>1,111</b>		
<b>Highways/Footpaths/Rights of Way &amp; Public Lighting</b>													
- Litterbins		0	-	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
- Rubbish collection		4600	4,120	89.6%	1,056	1,056	699	308	616	385	1,309	0	
- Dog-waste collection		650	713	109.8%	462	218	34	0	0	0	0	0	
- Leaf collection		300	300	100.0%	0	0	150	0	0	150	150	0	
- Misc		0	-	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
- Misc		0	-	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>5650</b>	<b>5,133</b>	<b>92.5%</b>	<b>1,518</b>	<b>1,274</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>616</b>	<b>535</b>	<b>1,459</b>		

**Community Hall Year End Accounts**

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Accounts

Year end 31st March 2023

2023/24		Year		Q4 - January to March 2024									Comments
		Budget	Year to Date	% of budget	Q1	Q2	Q3	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q4		
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>													
- Cleaning Contractors		£4,000	£4,400	110.0%	880	861	759	460	542	868	1,870	Work formerly done by Rosemary Brown and now by Debi Lee	
- Admin		£150	£52	34.8%	0	0	52	0	0	0	0	£39.50 - 123 Sheets (vat software) 3 x diaries - £12.72	
- VAT expenditure		£0	£2,574	0.0%	249	701	793	155	215	461	831		
- Cleaning materials		£600	£518	86.3%	0	168	172	87	11	46	148		
- Council tax		£1,800	£383	21.3%	163	165	55	0	0	0	0	Reduced rates due to retail hospitality discount applied since COVID	
- Water charges		£600	£462	77.0%	0	336	0	33	48	45	125	Water charges were billed in September and March each year, but Caastele Water has started billing monthly in 2024	
- Electricity		£3,000	£2,067	68.9%	460	363	617	217	150	261	628	Kept low because John Meisdike only turns the heating on as and when required, plus warmer winter than last year	
- Gas		£4,000	£1,608	40.2%	372	58	377	172	393	236	801	As above	
- Maintenance		£1,000	£443	44.3%	0	119	0	115	0	208	323	£119.45 plumber repairs to toilet. £18.34 new toilet seat. £115 + £190 = CCTV repair from RVTV	
- Tennis Court Maintenance		£1,000	£1,640	164.0%	0	465	0	0	0	1,175	1,175	£465 - Floodlighting repairs, £1175 - Moss kill and pressure wash all 3 tennis courts	
- Audit		£160	£145	90.6%	145	0	0	0	0	0	0	Total for the year	
- Equipment		£500	£94	18.8%	22	31	42	0	0	0	0	£21.50 Replacement first aid equipment. £30.79 samba futsal junior goal net.	
- Safety Check		£500	£593	118.7%	0	164	0	0	0	429	429	£41.58 - 2 kettles from Amazon	
- Play equipment		£500	£287	57.5%	0	0	0	0	91	196	287	£164 - Annual fire inspection, £216 - electric emergency lighting and pat testing.	
- Decorating		£0	£635	0.0%	0	535	0	0	0	0	0	£213 - Boiler servicing	
- Car park		£0	£0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Replacement child swing seat, rubber seat for toddler swing	
- Misc		£0	£0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Painting of the outside doors on the car park side	
- Misc		£0	£0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
<b>Total Expenditure (excluding contingency)</b>		<b>£17,810</b>	<b>£15,801</b>	<b>88.7%</b>	<b>2,290</b>	<b>4,026</b>	<b>2,866</b>	<b>1,238</b>	<b>1,451</b>	<b>3,929</b>	<b>6,618</b>		
<b>Contingency</b>		<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>		
<b>Total Expenditure (including contingency)</b>		<b>£17,810</b>	<b>£15,801</b>	<b>88.7%</b>	<b>2,290</b>	<b>4,026</b>	<b>2,866</b>	<b>1,238</b>	<b>1,451</b>	<b>3,929</b>	<b>6,618</b>		

It was suggested that a grant should be given at the end of financial year to balance out what the Community Hall needs rather than give too much.

- **Annual Audits**  
The Parish Council did not hear that we have been selected for an interim External Audit.
- **Business rates 2024/2025**  
Business rates will not be changing as the hospitality discounts has been extended to 24/25.
- **PKF Littlejohn** – external audit preparation for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. Abi Brown will arrange a meeting with Helen McCash. **Action: A. Brown**
- **Parish Church advert renewal**  
The renewal was agreed. The Parish Council currently pay for this and it was felt that as it was a Community Hall advert that the Community Hall should pay. It was agreed that the advert will be renewed with updated details for Parish Clerk.
- **Update bank account for online payments**  
Abi Brown will collate a report showing options and benefits of a new account which would allow for both dual signatory and online payments. **Action: A. Brown**
- **Microsoft software – annual renewal**  
This has been renewed and paid for. This has raised the issue that there is no way to pay for subscriptions without someone incurring a cost and claiming back.
- **Community Hall Trustees**
  - Trustee meeting was held on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2024. Minutes will be circulated once approved..
  - Tennis courts have been cleaned and a meeting with Becky Hall has been arranged to confirm our agreed contractual responsibilities with the Tennis Club **Action : R. Lewis**
  - H hirers will be charged for annual PAT testing for all electrical equipment left in the CH
  - Gutters have been inspected and are in good condition and will be monitored
  - The toilet door has been repaired and quotes are being gathered to install a new security door
  - Caretakers report has been received and will be circulated
  - Notice has been given to the Tennis and Cricket clubs of price increase
  - Review of long-term mission proposal of the Community Hall and engage with the village as to what they would like to see from the community hall is being planned.
- **CCTV Security update**  
RVTV are unable to repair the CCTV box and have quoted to provide and fit a new box. It is felt that it would cost too much at the moment to get a new CCTV unit installed by another supplier and that the cheapest option at this point would be to get the box replaced with RVTV. Abi Brown will make contact with RVTV to arrange repair. **Action: A. Brown**
- **Ladies Football 24/25 season**  
Cllr Richard Lewis will be having a meeting with both Watton Ladies and Watton Youth to discuss use of the pitch and price increase **Action : R. Lewis**
- **Environment**
  - Allotments – final half plot has been rented
  - It has been reported that rats have been seen at the allotment. The Allotment Association has asked if the Parish Council will cover the cost of the bait. It was agreed that the Parish Council are happy to cover the cost of the bait.

**b) Routine Reports****i) Monthly village-report**

- Grass on Sportsfield is in an acceptable condition considering the amount of rain
- Clothes recycling bin is full and needs emptying
- Dog bins are almost full
- The village sign is increasingly unstable. Glynn Mould now has pictures of the sign and will make further recommendations on how we can extend the life of the sign
- Grass verge near to the station is very overgrown
- Parking in Great Innings and Hockerill is getting increasingly worse. District Cllr Joe Thomas has requested from District Council to investigate potential implementation of parking permits

**ii) Caretakers Report**

Please refer to Caretakers Report

**iii) Defibrillator inspection**

Cllr Darren Appleby has offered to be trained on the defibrillator and attend a training course

**iv) Website/Facebook feedback**

There will be an increase in communication using both the website and Facebook

**v) Highways fault**

Nothing to report

**vi) Dog Fouling reports**

Dog fouling appears to have increased

**vii) Police Reports**

Please refer to Police Report

**10. Correspondence received**

We have received correspondence regarding fishing in the river Beane and to enquire if a license is required. Cllr Michael Brooks will find out who can issue a licence.

**Action: M. Brooks**

**11. Reports from other organisations**

No reports received

All Councillors to update their contacts regarding new details for new clerk.

**12. Items for Publicity**

- Vandalism notice once Cllr Nicola White has spoken to PC Sally Brooks
- Easter Fair article. Cllr Mark Richardson to put together some wording

**Action: N. White/A. Brown**

**Action: M. Richardson**

Meeting concluded at 21:20