

## Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Community Hall Board of Trustees held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011

Present: Mr. Nigel Poulton (Chairman) Mr. John. Meischke  
Mr. Ian Knight The Clerk (Mrs. Jane Allsop)

### 1 Apologies for absence

Leave of absence: Mr. David Stock.

### 2 Minutes and report of meeting held 17th January 2011

The minutes were accepted and signed as a true record during the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2011.

### 3 Area around the Cricket Club Shed including graffiti by the shed and the Community Hall walls

Mr. Knight made a site visit to the Cricket Club shed this morning and no clearance work has been done to date. After his visit, he spoke to Martin Tipper to ask him if the empty sacks around the shed were required and they are not.

It was agreed that Mr. Knight should e-mail Rod Clayton (Chairman of the Cricket Club) advising him that if the clearance work has not been done by the Easter holidays, the Parish Council will arrange for the work to be done and charge the Cricket Club accordingly. **Action: I. Knight**

Mr. Poulton to ask Adrian Thompson if he would be willing to do the clearance works if required.

**Action: N. Poulton**

**Recommendation:** The Parish Council agrees to the Trustees recommendation that the removal of the graffiti was the responsibility of the Parish Council and arrange for its removal.

### 4 Replacement Blinds and Community Planning Grant for the blinds

The new Pavilion blinds were fitted on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> February. However, the work done was not satisfactory in that there were two different colours of materials used instead of one and some of the top blinds did not fit correctly.

Ashley Blinds agreed to rectify the problem and fit the replacement blinds on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> April. However, the replacement blinds were also the wrong colours and some of the blinds were missing their fixings.

Richard Webb (Ashley Blinds) explained to Mr. Poulton that they used an external contractor to make up the blinds and that it was this company who were at fault. Mr. Webb has agreed to have a complete new set of blinds fitted on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> April.

Mr. Poulton has informed the grants officer at East Herts Council of the problems with the fitting of the blinds and was informed that this delay would not jeopardise the Community Hall receiving the grant for the blinds. **Action: N. Poulton/J. Allsop**

### 5 Decorating the Pavilion area

Adrian Thompson has done an excellent job of decorating the Pavilion area.

### 6 Damaged sewage drain update

Mr. Poulton reported that, by mutual agreement from the residents responsible, the repair work to the damaged sewage is now complete. This drain, although it went across Parish Council land was not connected to the Community Hall sewer system.

### 7 Disabled Parking sign

Mr. Poulton said that although he and Mr. Meischke had fitted a new disabled parking sign earlier this year, it needed replacing again.

## 8 Replace glass panels in the two fire exit doors

Brian Bunyan has replaced the glass panels with hardwood in the Pavilion fire exit doors that lead onto the sportsfield. He anticipates completing the same work to the Main entrance door within the next two weeks.

## 9 Repair to see-saw

Mr. Meischke said that he and Mr. Smith have an action point from the March Parish Council meeting to inspect the see-saw and fit a replacement bolt.

**Action: J. Meischke/ M. Smith**

## 10 "To grit or not to grit"

At the March Parish Council meeting, it was agreed that the advice received from Richard Slater (Village Hall Adviser, Community Development Agency for Hertfordshire) did not clarify the Parish Council's liability and our insurance brokers, Came and Company, should be contacted for clarification.

Following discussion between the Clerk and Vicki Jacomb (Came and Company) concerning the open aspect of the Community Hall site with the adjacent sportsfield the following e-mail was received on 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

'Thank you for time today to discuss the concerns over the car park and footpaths during the winter months; I have pleasure in confirming the details of our conversation.

The Public Liability section of the Parish Council policy will provide cover if a person is injured and that Parish Council is deemed to be negligent. I appreciate that due to the location the Parish Council are unable to close the car park and stop the public using the footpaths. Firstly I would recommend that Parish Council carries out a risk assessment of the car park and footpaths. If the Parish Council decides they will grit or salt the car park and footpaths they need to ensure that this process can be continued throughout the whole period the car park or footpaths are icy.

If the Parish Council decides they are not going to grit or salt the car park and footpaths I would recommend that the public are informed of their decision i.e. Parish Newsletter or Parish Notice Boards.

If you would like me to clarify any points please do not hesitate to contact me.'

Vicki Jacomb advised the Clerk that the Parish Council should advertise in the Parish News (in early autumn) the Parish Council's intention not to grit the areas around the Community Hall. She suggested that there was no need to go to the expense of having permanent signs erected in the area.

**Recommendation:** The Parish Council agrees that the areas around the Community Hall are not gritted and asks Mr. Knight to produce laminated notices stating that the areas around the Community Hall are not gritted. The notices will be put up in the Community Hall windows and notice boards in autumn 2011. A paragraph about gritting would also be included in the Community Hall hire agreement.

## 11 Cars Parking in the Car Park and Barrier

At its March 2011 meeting, Parish Councillors agreed not to pursue the installation of a car park barrier. Not only would the project be very expensive, but also the responsibility of opening and closing the barrier would be a problem. The Trustees agreed that the installation of a barrier was also unlikely to solve the noise issue in this area.

## 12 Condition of Oak tree in Sportsfield

At the January 2011 Trustees meeting, Mr. Poulton reported that it had been brought to his attention that there was some disease on the Oak tree on the sportsfield, to the right of the MPPA looking from the Community Hall. The Clerk had written to Malcolm Amey (Landscape Officer, East Herts Council) accordingly and following a site visit Mr. Amey verbally informed Mr. Poulton that he would be writing to the Parish Council to inform them that the Oak tree does have a fungal infection, but it is not in immediate danger however, the situation should be monitored on a regular basis. The Clerk has chased Mr. Amey requesting a written response but this matter remains outstanding.

The Clerk to chase.

**Action: J. Allsop**

## 13 Additional cleaning in the changing rooms and adjoining corridor

Mr. Poulton said that dirt has built up around the edges of the changing rooms and the corridor. He has asked Rebecca Evans if she is willing to clean these areas for the self-employed cleaning rates of £7.65 per hour. Rebecca Evans could do this work over the Easter holidays, if required.

**Recommendation:** The Parish Council agrees that Rebecca Evans carry-out the extra cleaning work in the changing room and corridor.

## 14 Outside Gents and ladies toilet

Approximately two weeks ago, John Phillips contacted Mr. Poulton about a problem in the outside Ladies toilets. Vandals had smeared mud on the walls, filled one of the toilets up with paper towels and defecated on the floor. Mr. Poulton said that he had the job of clearing up the mess

A third party saw three young men go into the toilets and took photos of them, which they then passed to Mr. Poulton, who forwarded them to the Police. Although, these pictures do not prove that the young men were involved in the vandalism of the Ladies toilet, the police have interviewed them and given them a verbal warning.

The aluminium urinal needs cleaning or replacing with a ceramic bowl.

**Recommendation:** The Parish Council budget for replacing the urinal with a ceramic bowl in 2012/13.

## 15 Sportsfield hedge

Mr. Poulton said that he has been approached by members of the public, including mothers, about the potential danger of children running through the gaps in the sportsfield hedge into on-coming traffic along its length up School Lane. He suggested that wooden posts and fencing could be installed in the gaps.

Mr. Meischke suggested that a live woven hedge could be installed and this might be a good project for one of the volunteer teams.

This item to be discussed at the next April Parish Council meeting under Environment Sub-Committee - Identify volunteer projects in the village for Glaxo Smith Klein and Tesco volunteer teams.

**Parish Council Agenda: 04/11**

## 16 UV protective glass for tapestry

The Clerk noticed that the Perspex/glass in the tapestry does not meet the frame at the top. This could cause the tapestry to discolour. A verbal quotation of £290 from Stanborough Arts (<http://www.stanborougharts.co.uk/>) has been obtained to supply UV acrylic (approximate size 60" x 47.5"), dismantle frame and reassemble. This would be on the basis that the tapestry is delivered to Stanborough Arts.

The Trustees inspected the Tapestry and noted that it also needed re-framing. It was agreed to obtain quotations for the re-framing of the tapestry to include the installation of UV acrylic or glass. **Action: J. Allsop**

**Recommendation:** The Parish Council include a budget provision for the re-framing of the Tapestry in the 2012/13 budget.

## 17 Purchase of picnic bench

Mr. Poulton noted while updating the Asset register it included the provision of a picnic bench. He was originally approached by Mother's using the sportsfield area almost two years ago.

**Recommendation:** The Parish Council defer the purchase of a bench until such time that they are approached again.

## 18 Fire alarm inspection by Jarrards

The contractors from Ashley Blinds damaged the fire alarm equipment in the Pavilion whilst fitting the new blinds. Jarrards Limited, who installed the original fire alarm system in the Community Hall, repaired the damage and Ashley Blinds paid for the repair work.

At the March Parish Council meeting, it was agreed to accept Jarrards Limited quotation of £120 to test and inspect the fire alarm system and submit a Niceic certificate. This work has now been done and they have supplied a further quotation for the following work.

Fire alarm test and inspection (early)	£120 plus VAT
Electrical inspection test and inspection (three-yearly)	£250 plus VAT
Emergency lighting test and inspection (yearly)	£120 plus VAT

The Clerk said that Keith Burgess carries out an electrical inspection every three years and annually inspects the emergency lighting. His charges in August 2010 were as follows.

Electrical inspection test and inspection (3 yearly)	£60
Emergency lighting test and inspection (yearly)	£60

In September 2009 when he was only carry-out the electrical inspection, he charged £75.

Mr. Burgess is not willing to carry-out an inspection of the fire alarm system.

**Recommendation:** The Parish Council to make a decision on which contractor should carry-out the three-yearly electrical inspection and the annual electrical inspections.

## 19 Guidance on The Commercial EPC

On 14<sup>th</sup> March, DEA Direct e-mailed the Parish Council concerning the requirement to have commercial energy performance certificates for village halls. Richard Slater (Village Hall Adviser, Community Development Agency for Hertfordshire) was contacted asking for clarification and emailed his response on 22<sup>nd</sup> March as follows.

‘The advice that we have received is that A village hall run by an independent charity does not have to provide a EPC and these are only needed if the property were to be sold or let – they are not for display in the hall and they are certainly not needed each time a PC or anyone hires or lets a hall whether for a wedding or anything else. Not unless the law changes. A charity committee may seek an EPC from a landowner or LA if they are in the process of taking out a new lease or purchasing a new hall but that would be the responsibility of the other party. The display EC is a requirement of facilities owned by a LA – as most halls are owned by charities this again does not apply.

I hope this helps.’

**Recommendation:** The Parish Council does not take this matter further, based on advice from Richard Slater that the requirement for commercial energy performance certificates is not relevant for village halls.

## 20 E-mail from Redbourn Parish Council re cricket pitch and the padlocking of the gate onto the sportsfield

On Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> March, the Clerk was contacted by a member of public advising her that two bollards had been sawn off at the entrance leading onto the Abel Smith field in Mill Lane, that lies above the Lammas woodland,. She contacted the Abel Smith Estate, because of fears that travellers could access the field and they took immediate action to secure that field, and others that they own around the village, from unwanted vehicular.

In view of this, and the receipt of an e-mail from Redbourn Parish Council advising that youngsters in a 4-wheel drive had recently vandalised their common, Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke agreed that the sportsfield gate should be kept locked. A combination padlock has been purchased and fitted to the gate on the sportsfield. The Clerk e-mailed the combination of the lock to both the grass contractors, Frank Cooper and Son, and also to Martin Tipper (Cricket Club).

## 21 Chairman/Trustees report

- **Trustees Annual report**

Mr. Poulton said he would be preparing the Annual Trustees Report shortly. This will be read out at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

**Action: N. Poulton**

- The meeting closed at 1450.