

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 11th May 2010, following the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council

Present:	Mr. J. Meischke (Chairman)	Mr. M. Smith (Vice-Chairman)
	Mr. C. Clark	Mrs. C. Dinnin
	Mr. I. Harris	Mr. I. Knight
	Mrs. McCash	Mr. N. Poulton
	Mr. D. Stock	The Clerk (Mrs. J. Allsop)
Public:	Mr. John Love (until 1930)	

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Filer.

2 Public Participation

None.

3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

None.

4 Declaration of Interests

Mrs. McCash declared a pecuniary interest in item 9 d, Correspondence received, McCash and Hay - Audit of Community Hall accounts (Mrs. McCash's husband, Murray McCash, prepared the audit for the Community Hall accounts).

5 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13th April 2010**
Mrs. McCash proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.
Mr. Smith seconded the motion and all present at that meeting were in favour.

b) Review of actions

- **Monitor the allotment gate to see if the new gate post has been installed and notify**
Refer to the item below.
- **When installed, check new gate post on Allotments**
Mr. Meischke said that the new gatepost had been installed and was now secure. Mrs. Dinnin disagreed and said that it did not look secure. Mr. Meischke and Mrs. Dinnin to inspect. **Action: J. Meischke/ C. Dinnin**
- **Take the Parish Council accounts to Jim Morrissey for auditing on Tuesday 4th May**
The Clerk said that the accounts have now been audited and we are waiting for Jim Morrissey audit report.
- **Contact the Watton-at-Stone School re litter problem on school land adjacent to footpath 17**
Mr. Poulton said that he inspected the area and it looked relatively clear of litter.
Mr. Harris said that he also inspected the area when he was carrying-out the monthly village-report and noted that there was little rubbish in the school field.
- **Attend East Herts Council Rural Parish Conference on 10th June**
Mrs. Dinnin said that she is unable to attend the Rural Parish Conference on 10th June. Refer to item 9 c, Correspondence received - East Herts Rural Parish Conference Thursday 10th June 2010.
- **Write to the planning department re Watton Methodist Church, High Street: completed.**
- **Write to the planning department re Watton Place Clinic: completed.**
- **Write a letter of thanks to Alan Beadle re installation of replacement bench seat near Watkins Hall Farm: completed.**
- **Issue ferreting licences to Mr. Adams and Mr. Phillips: completed.**

Mr. John Love left the meeting at 1930.

- **E-mail all Parish Councillors the November 2007 long-term capital expenditure items: completed.**
- **E-mailed all Parish Councillors the summary 12-monthly statement of accounts: completed.**
- **E-mail Mr. Meischke and Mr. Poulton the current version of the Asset register for updating: completed.**
- **Update the Asset register for approval at the June 2010 Parish Council meeting**
The Clerk to amend the Asset Registers for the Parish Council and Community Hall to include the adjustments made by Mr. Poulton. **Action: J. Allsop**

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- **Obtain insurance quotations from Came and Company, AON Limited and Suffolk ACRE Insurance Services: completed.**
Refer to item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee - Parish Council insurance.
- **E-mail the Clerk's from Benington, Datchworth and Tewin to obtain the names of alternative insurers: completed.**
- **Contact Mr. Lewis and Mr. Bunyan re lock for external Community Hall door**
Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall Trustees - Update on new external door to Community Hall from the Car Park.
- **Refer the subject of anti-social behaviour of footballers to the Sports and Social Club at the start of the next football season**
Mr. Knight confirmed that this action point had been completed.
- **Accept RKA Services quotation and replace all of the lighting tubes in the Main Hall**
Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall Trustees - Replacement of lights in the Sports Hall.
- **Secure lose kicker board nearest to sportsfield**
Mr. Poulton said that Mark Lee repaired the lose kicker board and fencing at a cost of £75.
- **Write a specification for the painting and any repair work required to the kicker-boards: outstanding.** **Action: I. Knight**
- **E-mail Mrs. McCash the kicker-boards specification: outstanding.** **Action: I. Knight**
- **Pass kicker-boards specification to contractor who may be interest in quoting to do the work**
Mrs. McCash cannot complete this action point until she receives the kicker board specification. **Action: H. McCash**
- **Agree what action should be taken re missing slats on the bench seat near Mill Lane**
It was agreed to ask Mark Lee to replace the missing slats. **Action: N. Poulton**
- **Prepare the COMMA grant application form**
Refer to item 8 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee - New Tennis Court.
- **Obtain bank statement for the Watton-at-Stone Community Hall Tennis Court Fund account: completed.**
- **Speak to Tony Beach about Allotment cultivation and clearance work**
Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Allotments.
- **Move logs on Watton Green when working on site**
Mr. Smith said that Blue Bury Contractors would move the logs when they are next on-site to cut the grass.
- **Ask Fred Burnell to deal with the mole problem on the sportsfield: completed.**
- **Ask Ted Brown to weed kill children's play area safety surface**
Mr. Poulton said that Ted Brown had weed killed around the children's play area and the Community Hall.
- **Inspect the paintwork on the play area**
This item to be included in the 2011/12 budget. **B & F: Budget 2011/12**
- **September Google Calendar reminder re offensive language used by footballers : completed**
- **Speak to PC Andy Woodward re items 2 and 3 of Mike Freeman's letter**
Mrs. McCash said that she had tried to contact PC Andy Woodward on numerous occasions, but had failed to do so.
It was agreed that Mrs. McCash draft a letter to Jon Speed (Chief Inspector, Hertfordshire Constabulary) to inform him that there is problems with communications with PC Andy Woodward. **Action: H. McCash**
- **Write to Mike Freeman: completed.**
- **Only forward temporary events and open license applications when they include events in our parish: ongoing.**
- **Renew our CPRE membership: completed.**
- **E-mail all Parish Councillors East Herts Council letter re Planning permission at 103 Great Innings South: completed.**
- **Contact East Herts Council for advice about the best location and type of tree for the sportsfield**
Mr. Poulton said that he is waiting for a response from Malcolm Amey regarding the location and type of tree for the sportsfield. Mr. Amey's initial suggestion is that the tree be located at the top corner of the sportsfield by the bench seat. There is no urgency to chase for a response because the tree-planting season is in late Autumn/early winter. **Action: N. Poulton**
- **Obtain quotations for the removal of the Oak tree in the sportsfield hedge opposite 10 School Lane**
Mr. Poulton obtained a quotation of £240 from Adam Welch for the removal of the Oak tree. Dr. Norden will be paying Adam Welch direct for doing this work.

- **Pass Mr. Lee's letter to PC Andy Woodward: outstanding.** **Action: H. McCash**
Refer to item 5 b, Review of actions - Speak to PC Andy Woodward re items 2 and 3 of Mike Freeman's letter.
- **Liaise with Mr. Meischke about a written response to Mr. Lee: outstanding.** **Action: H. M Cash**

c) Action points outstanding for more than two months

- **Arrange for the Community Hall accounts to be audited by McCash and Hay:** completed.
- **Inspect Whempstead notice board to decide how best to repair it**
Mr. Clark and Mr. Meischke have inspected the notice board and agreed that it is not repairable.
Mr. Poulton said that he felt that the Parish Council should provide a notice board for Whempstead because they form part of our parish and that residents should be kept informed of items of interest.
Parish Councillors discussed the option of replacing the notice board or removing it.
It was agreed that Mr. Clark contact the residents of the 14 properties in Whempstead to ask them if they use the current notice board and if they would like a new one installed in approximately the same location but nearer to the crossroads. **Action: C. Clark**

6 Planning

Mr. Stock reported on the following items.

a) Applications

i) Blue Hill Farm House, Walkern Road (3/10/0742/FP)

Roof lights to rear of new detached dwelling

Mr. Knight contacted the neighbouring residents, who had no objections to the roof-lights because they do not overlook the existing properties.

Mr. Knight said he was concerned that the storage shed built on the site looks like a stable and that it could at some time in the future used as a stable, this would be contrary to the planning consent for this property.

It was agreed that the Parish Council had no objections to the roof lights. However, before writing to inform East Herts Council, Mr. Knight should visit the site to inspect the storage shed and e-mail all Parish Councillors with his findings. **Action: I. Knight**

The Clerk to write to East Herts Council following instructions from Parish Councillors **Action: J. Allsop**

b) Decisions

i) Bardolphs Farm, Ware Road

Erection of barn for grain storage and associated landscaping erection of replacement dwelling

- East Herts Council - permission granted

ii) Watton Methodist Church, High Street (3/10/0444/FP)

New side entrance with ramp, single storey side and rear extension and vestry extension and surfacing of existing grass parking area to rear of church

- East Herts Council - permission granted

7 Specific items

a) Street lighting

This item to be deferred until the September 2010 meeting, by which time Hertfordshire Highways will know if they have been successful, or not, in obtaining private finance to replace the existing street lighting in the village. **Agenda: 09/10**

It was agreed to e-mail Mark Fells (Strategy Development Manger, Hertfordshire Highways) asking him to keep us updated on progress. **Action: J. Allsop**

b) Voluntary litterpicking day

After discussion about the logistical difficulties of having a voluntary litterpick day, it was agreed that the caring people in the village who carry-out voluntary litterpicking to keep our village tidy should be recognised.

It was agreed to place an article in the Parish News accordingly. **Action: J. Meischke**

Mr. Harris said that the village was very clear of litter during his village inspection.

c) East Herts Council - Customer Service Briefing on Wednesday 28th April

The Clerk attended the East Herts Council Customer Briefing on 28th April. She said that there was a disappointing turn out with only three Parish/Town Councillors and two Clerks attending out of ten people who accepted the invitation. The numbers were further reduced when the Councillor and Clerk from Sawbridgeworth Town Council left the meeting, leaving representatives from Aston, Datchworth and Watton-at-Stone.

The Clerk said that East Herts Council provided an excellent PowerPoint presentation, a tour of the facilities, followed by discussions and lunch.

Mr. Poulton told the Clerk that she should claim mileage expenses for attending the Customer Service Briefing at the East Herts Council offices in Bishop's Stortford. He said that the round trip is 32 miles and the mileage allowance is 40p per mile. This was agreed by Parish Councillors.

d) Village video update

Mr. Poulton has had several enquiries requesting copies of a DVD version of our village video.

After discussion, it was agreed that we should find out the costs of copying the current video onto a DVD.

Action: N. Poulton

Mr. Meischke agreed to make enquiries about updating the video sleeve for a DVD version.

Action: J. Meischke

The sale of videos, village maps and other items in the Parish Council's possession was discussed. It was agreed that we could sell some of these items at the annual Village Fete. Mr. Knight to make enquiries about the use of a village fete stall.

Action: I. Knight

8 Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

In the absence of Mr. Filer, Mr. Meischke reported on the following items.

- **Monthly accounts**

All Parish Councillors present were given a copy of the monthly accounts.

Mr. Knight proposed that the Parish Council approves the payments. Mr. Clark seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

- **Parish Council insurance**

The following quotations for the Parish Council insurance have been received.

Broker	Insurer	1- year	3- year	5-year
Came and Company	Aviva	£1,295.47	£1,230.70	
Suffolk ACRE Insurance Services	Zurich	£1560.04	£1482.04	£1404.04

AON Limited (Allianz) failed to provide a quotation in time for this meeting.

Mrs. McCash proposed we accept a one-year undertaking with our current insurance broker, Came and Company. Mr. Smith seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Employee Performance Review**

The Clerk has had her annual performance review completed by Mr. Meischke. Both Mr. Meischke and the Clerk have signed a copy of the review.

Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Poulton reported on the following items.

- **Update on new external door to Community Hall from the Car Park**

Mr. Poulton was pleased to report that Brian Bunyan will be fitting the new external door before the end of the month. The new style lock for the external door was found to be unsuitable because it would clash with the adjacent wall making it virtually impossible to use. Michael Lewis has found an alternative lock but needs to clarify with East Herts Council building control if he is able to use it in a public building.

- **Update on the lock for internal door in Community Hall**

Mr. Poulton said that Laidlaw have still not supplied us with a replacement Main Hall lock for the one that went faulty. The Clerk to chase.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Replacement of lights in the Sports Hall**

Mr. Poulton has purchased the replacement lights for the Main Hall, which will be fitted by RKA Services on Friday 14th May.

Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **New Tennis Court**

The Comma grant application has been submitted by the Chairman of the Community Hall Trustees. Mr. Knight said that he was not optimistic of success because our application requires all of the COMMA funding pot available and four separate applications for a Comma grant have been received.

A decision about our application will be made on 7th July 2010. Mr. Knight said if unsuccessful, a new planning application for the tennis court would need to be submitted to East Herts Council.

- **Sportsfield**

Frank Cooper and Son have done the maintenance work on the sportsfield and this should improve its quality for both the cricket and football players.

The Cricket Club were upset that the sportsfield grass was not cut for two weeks after completion of the work and they were not informed of the schedule of works.

Mr. Smith said that Martin Tipper (Cricket Club) knew exactly the situation regarding the sportsfield maintenance because it was discussed during the Sports and Social Club meetings he attended. Frank Cooper and Son could not notify us when the work was being done because the weather conditions needed to be correct before the work could commence.

It was agreed in future to write to the Cricket and Football Clubs informing them of the approximate time schedules for sportsfield maintenance and contacting them by e-mail or phone when definite dates are known.

Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Allotments**

- **Kimberley hedge cuttings left on Allotments**

Adam Welch has burnt all the Kimberley hedge cuttings left on the allotments. Peter Evernden has paid Adam Welch £100 for doing the work. However, there was an additional amount of hedge cuttings left on another plot which had been left out of Adam Welch's quotation. Peter Evernden said he was only quoted for £100 and wasn't prepared to pay the additional £50. As the cuttings had to be burnt, Mr. Meischke, Mrs. Dinnin and Mr. Poulton approved the extra work to be done by Adam Welch.

- **Allotments quotation for cultivation and clearance work**

Mrs. Dinnin said she had left several messages for Mr. Beach asking him to provide his public liability cover note, but he had failed to do so.

It was agreed to write to Tony Beach stating that because he has not provided us with a copy of his public liability insurance, although he has been reminded on a number of occasions, the Parish Council no longer wish him to proceed with the work.

Mr. Harris agreed to draft a letter to Mr. Beach and copy it to Mr. Meischke and Mrs. Dinnin.

Action: I. Harris

- **Garden Rubbish on the allotments**

The owner/occupier of 128 High Street has been dumping grass cuttings on the allotments. It was agreed to write to the homeowner, Mrs. Christine Allison, asking her not to place grass cuttings on the allotment area.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Rabbits on the allotments**

The area between the fenced perimeter and the rabbit proof fencing is getting overgrown and rabbits are burrowing there. Mr. Harris said he noticed a couple of shrubs growing and also noted rabbit holes.

- **AGM - Allotment and Garden Association**

Mrs. Dinnin and Mr. Smith will attend the Allotment and Garden AGM on 18th May 2010.

Action: C. Dinnin/M. Smith

b) Routine reports

- i) **Fire-alarm test**

The fire-alarm was tested by Mr. Poulton this afternoon.

- ii) **Monthly village-report**

Mr. Harris completed the report on Saturday 8th and 9th of May 2010.

Only the adverse items highlighted in the monthly village-report are minuted.

- **Sportsfield play area** – The small swing seats are cracked and look dangerous.

Mr. Meischke and Mr. Poulton to inspect and take action as necessary. **Action: J. Meischke/N. Poulton**

- **Salt bins need filling** - This item is on the Google calendar to ask Hertfordshire Highways to fill all the salt bins before winter.

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- **Allotment plan** – Water has seeped through the laminated sign. No action required at this time.

- **War Memorial** – There are weeds growing through the gravel around the War Memorial.

Mr. Poulton to ask Ted Brown to weed-kill.

Action: N. Poulton

- **Great Innings play area** There are weeds growing through the tarmac and the plastic matting at the top of the slide is cracked.
- **Road signs** – some of the plastic road signs in the village have been vandalised.
Mr. Poulton to chase East Herts Council for replacement signs. **Action: N. Poulton**

iii) Weekly sportsfield-report and action

- As reported earlier, Ted Brown weed killed around the children’s play area and the Community Hall.
- Mr. Meischke and Mr. Poulton had the unpleasant job removing human excrement from the washbasin in the external ladies-toilets and unblocking the ladies-toilets, which were full of toilet paper.
Mr. Meischke said that there would soon come a time when he and Mr. Poulton were no longer willing to clear out the toilets and therefore they will have to be closed to the public and possibly converted into much needed storage space.

iv) Website

None.

v) Website diary

None.

9 Correspondence received

a) The Planning Inspectorate decision re modification order for footpaths 39 and 33

The Planning Inspectorate have approved the modification orders for footpaths 39 - Watton at Stone and 33 - Aston.

b) Local Access Forum (HertsLAF) conference on 9th October 2010

The Hertfordshire Local Access Forum (HertsLAF) is holding its second Conference on the 9th October 2010 in London Colney. This year the focus is ‘Improving Local Access for the Future’.

As with the previous conference, attendance will be free and there will be four workshops with opportunities to share your experiences and discuss solutions with colleagues and other participants.

It was agreed to forward the details of the conference to Linda Thurlow, Watton-at-Stone Ramblers.

Action: J. Allsop

c) East Herts Rural Parish Conference Thursday 10th June 2010

Mr. Clark to attend the Rural Parish Conference.

Action: C. Clark

d) McCash and Hay - Audit of Community Hall accounts

Mrs. McCash left the meeting.

McCash and Hay have submitted their audit report for the Community Hall accounts for the year ended 31st March 2010. The Trustees to inspect the accounts for approval at the June Parish Council meeting.

**Action: Community Hall Trustees
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Mrs. McCash returned to the meeting.

10 Village organisations

- **Watton Youth Drop Inn**
Mr. Poulton said that up to 30 young people are attending the Watton Youth Drop Inn group each week. Recent activities have included street dancing and a football club.
Mr. Stock asked what the situation is regarding adult helpers. Mr. Poulton said that he was hoping to enlist a couple more helpers in the near future.
- **Watton-at-Stone School Governors:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Watch:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone War Memorial Hall Management Committee:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Pre-School Playgroup**
Mrs. Dinnin said that Kirsty Green has been elected as the new chairperson to the Watton-at-Stone Pre-School Playgroup.
Karen Neate, pre-school playgroup leader, is leaving at the end of the month and will be succeeded by Christine Tippin.
Some fantastic wooden play equipment had been installed with money awarded from ‘Tops Grant’.

- **Watton-at-Stone Scout & Guide Group:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Sports & Social Club:** Nothing to report.
- **Police Authority:** Nothing to report.
- **River Beane Restoration Association**

Mr. Knight reported that the World Wild Life Fund (WWF) are mounting a co-ordinated programme to draw attention to the very poor state of the chalk streams in South East England.

They have in particular focussed attention on the River Beane and the nearby Mimram (flows through Welwyn).

WWF held a very good PR event at the Tewin Bury Farm hotel on Thursday 29th April to which local important people were invited, including local village Parish Council Chairmen, Town Mayors and dignitaries, MPs (including Oliver Heald) as well as the River Beane Association (RBRA) and the Friends of the Mimram and other environmental groups.

The event was focused on concerns about the 'Rivers on the Edge project' and considered the problems and recent activity in developing our understanding about the barriers to fixing the abstraction problem on the Mimram and Beane as well as rivers across the country. The RBRA has ongoing contact with the WWF.

The WWF presented their latest report and a pdf version will be forwarded to all Parish Councillors and a copy will go on circulation. **Action: I. Knight**

The WWF are planning to work over the next 18 months both nationally and locally to see if they can help gain momentum in moving things forward and in particular, getting government commitment to address some of the systemic problems.

11 Items for Parish News

The following items were identified for inclusion in the June 2010 issue of the Parish News.

- Litter clearance in the village
Mr. Meischke to write the entry accordingly. **Action: J. Meischke**
- Annual Parish reports
The Parish reports to be included in the June issue of the Parish news, provided the cost of photocopy is less than £40. If the cost is above this figure, Mr. Knight to notify all Parish Councillors of the additional cost before proceeding with the printing work. **Action: I. Knight**
- **The meeting closed at 2040.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 8th June 2010.**