

**Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2011**

Present:	Mr. John Meischke (Chairman)	Mr. Michael Smith (Vice-Chairman)
	Mrs. Christine Dinnin	Mr. Iain Harris
	Mr. Denis Filer	Mr. Ian Knight
	Mr. Nigel Poulton	The Clerk (Mrs. Jane Allsop)
Members of the press	Catherine Lofthouse, Hertfordshire	
Members of the public:	None	

**1 Apologies for absence and leave of absence**

Apologies for absence: Mrs. Helen McCash and Mr. Charles Clark.

Leave of absence: Mr. David Stock.

**2 Public Participation**

None.

**3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report**

None.

**4 Declaration of Interests**

Mr. Knight declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 9 b, Correspondence received - River Beane Restoration Association (Mr. Knight is the treasurer of the River Beane Restoration Association).

**5 Minutes of the last meeting**

**a) Acceptance**

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2011**

The following amendment was made to the minutes of the meeting.

- Page 4, item 7f, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, end of the penultimate paragraph

‘has resided to cancel’ should read ‘has decided to cancel’

Mr. Filer proposed that the minutes, as amended, be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record. Mrs. Dinnin seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

**b) Review of actions**

- **E-mail PC Andy Woodward re car registration numbers: completed.**
- **Alter external lighting time clock: completed.**
- **Chase Arro Signs re delivery of car-park usage sign**  
The car park sign has now been delivered and Mr. Meischke has installed it on the Community Hall wall facing the car park and adjacent to one of the external toilet doors.
- **Inspect the Mill Lane fence adjacent to the bridge and take action as necessary**  
Mrs. Dinnin reported that the Mill Lane fence adjacent to the bridge has not been repaired. In fact, all the fencing is now down with no safety tape or temporary fencing in place, making this area very dangerous. On Mrs. Dinnin’s instructions, the Clerk e-mailed Eralp Yucelt (Hertfordshire Highways) asking that he arrange for some safety fencing to be installed as soon as possible.  
Parish Councillors also expressed their concern. Mrs. Dinnin to monitor the situation. **Action: C. Dinnin**
- **E-mail ideas for the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 2012 to Councilors**  
Mrs. Dinnin agreed to put an article in the Parish News asking residents to come forward with ideas for celebrating the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee. **Action: C. Dinnin**
- **Write to planning re 60 Great Innings North (3/11/0071/FP): completed.**
- **Write to planning re 1 High Street (3/11/0126/FP): completed.**
- **Ask Alex Dinnin if he can improve the quality of the ‘Peep in the Past’ film**  
Mrs. Dinnin said she had spoken to her son Alex Dinnin, who will talk to a colleague about the possibility of improving the quality of the ‘Peep in the Past’ film.  
This item to be placed on the agenda for the April Parish Council meeting. **Agenda: 04/11**
- **Contact David Sinclair (Whempstead Gate Farm) re removal of notice board**  
Mr. Clark was not present at the meeting to report on this item.

- **Contact Richard Slater (Village Hall Adviser, CDA for Herts) re supply of grit**  
Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall - To grit or not to grit.
- **Contact Adrian Thompson re Pavilion decoration work: completed.**  
Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall - Decoration of the Pavilion.
- **Contact Ashley Blinds re the fitting of new blinds in the Pavilion: completed.**  
Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall - Fitting of new blinds for the Pavilion.
- **Chase P. J. Fencing for quotation to repair of MPPA fencing wire**  
Mr. Knight reported that P. J. Fencing have submitted their quotation of £105 plus VAT. Because the quotation is over £100, Mr. Meischke, Mr. Filer and Mr. Knight authorised accepting it.
- **Find out who owns the litterbin which has appeared in the field by the Lammas**  
Mrs. Dinnin said that she had contacted Tom Goldsmith (Hertfordshire County Council, Rights of Way) who said that he had no knowledge of the bin and suggested it might belong to East Herts Council.  
Mr. Smith said that he had installed the litterbin at the request of Mrs. McCash, who agreed to empty the bin. After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed that the bin should be removed as soon as possible.  
**Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke**
- **Confirm attendance at the Policing Plan launch 2011**  
Mr. Filer has confirmed that he will be attending the Policing Plan Launch on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March at the Police Headquarters in Welwyn Garden City.
- **E-mail from Sophy Severn re her Right to Build questionnaire: completed.**
- **Write parish news insert: completed.**

**c) Action points outstanding for more than two months**

- **Arrange for copy paper to be delivered to Mr. Iain Harris**  
Mr. Harris declined the offer of a pack of 500 sheets of copy paper.

**6 Planning**

**a) Applications**

**i) 1 The beaside (3/11/0192/FP)**

Two storey rear extension and first floor side extension

Mr. Meischke said he visited the neighbouring properties in the Beaside, High Street and two in Lammas Road, whose gardens both back onto the site. Only the residents of the two properties in Lammas Road verbally express an objection for reasons of privacy. Mrs. Gray, of 22 Lammas Road, has today copied the Parish Council with her letter of objection to the planning department (dated 7<sup>th</sup> March). After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed to write to the planning department informing them that they are concerned about the site plan, which showed all of the Beaside and part of the High Street, but did not include properties in Lammas Road, the gardens of which back onto 1 The Beaside. Parish Councillors felt it was an unfair representation. The Parish Council wish to object to the application for the following reasons.

1. The proposed extension is an over development on a small site.
2. The Parish Council has a policy of objecting to garage conversions. The loss of parking space is likely to lead to increased parking either on-street or on the frontage of the site, in this already congested cul-de-sac.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**b) Decisions**

**c) Withdrawn**

**i) Land adj, 99, High Street (3/10/2045/FP)**

New dwelling with part formed of conversion of existing stable with attached existing garage and car parking

**ii) Land adj, 99, High Street (3/10/2046/FP)**

New dwelling with part formed of conversion of existing stable with attached existing garage – Listed Building consent

**7 Specific items**

**a) Petition re development at 1 High Street**

Mr. Meischke read out the following letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> March and enclosed petition from David and Frances Taylor of Beane Cottage, 11 Walkern Road

‘Please find enclosed copies of about 200 signatures mainly of residents at the north end of Watton-at-Stone requesting the rejection of this proposal.

We would appreciate this to be submitted for discussion at the next Parish Council meeting.’

Mr. Meischke said that Mr. and Mrs. Taylor are disappointed that the Parish Council did not contact them prior to the February Parish Council meeting, when this application was discussed. They would both have attended the February Parish Council meeting if they had they been made aware of the application.

Mr. Meischke said that Mr. and Mrs. Taylor were under the misapprehension that the Parish Council had some authority over planning decisions and he had informed them that the Parish Council are only able to make comments to the planning department at East Herts Council based on local knowledge, it is the planning department that makes all decisions.

It is the Parish Council's protocol to visit the residents affected by a planning application. However, in this instance the Parish Council did not visit Mr. and Mrs. Taylor because of the public meeting.

Mr. Poulton said that Mr. and Mrs. Taylor were well aware that a planning application for the erection of two dwellings was due to be submitted and they had both attended the public consultation meeting on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> September in the Community Hall as well as a meeting with the developers.

Mr. Knight and Mrs. Dinnin said that they were unaware that the height reductions to the two proposed dwellings had only been reduced by four inches. Although, the information was available on a site plan available at the February Parish Council meeting, neither Mr. Knight or Mrs. Dinnin saw the plan and felt that the height of the proposed dwellings would be overbearing.

It was agreed to record in these minutes that although the Parish Council did not visit the neighbouring properties, they had followed the due process regarding the planning application number 3/11/0126/FP for 1 High Street (2 no. detached dwellings with associated car parking and vehicular access). The February agenda notices, which included item 6 a iii, Planning application for 1 High Street (3/11/0126/FP), were properly advertised on the three notice boards situated at High Street/Great Innings roundabout, Summan Stores and the Community Hall. The Parish Council discussed the plans in full at the February Parish Council meeting and made a unanimous decision to write to the planning department as follows.

'The Parish Council are writing in support of the above application but ask that the following planning condition be applied.

The site boundary with the Walkern Road be arranged such that there is a clear line of sight to drivers. The current boundary partially obscures the bridge in one direction and partially obscures vehicles approaching the bridge in the other direction.'

It was agreed that as Mr. and Mrs. Taylor had taken the trouble to write to Parish Councillors, with the exception of Mr. Poulton who was away on holiday at the time, the Parish Council should respond to their grievances.

Mr. Harris agreed to draft a letter in response to Mr. and Mrs. Taylor's comments for approval by Parish Councillors via email.

**Action: I. Harris**

#### **b) Community Hall car park**

Mr. Smith said that the installation of a car park barrier would be in the region of £3,000 to £5,000.

After discussion, 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.

It was agreed to inform Mr. Chris Fowler (1 School Lane) of the Parish Council's decision.

**Action: J. Meischke**

Now that Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke have changed the external lighting time clock to allow the lighting to stay on until 0200, it is hoped that young drivers will be deterred from parking in the Community Hall car park and playing loud music into the early hours of the morning.

#### **c) Request for Volunteer working teams**

Mrs. Dinnin said that she had several projects that needed undertaking in the village and had already contacted Tony Bradford about one of them asking for volunteer help.

It was agreed to contact both GlaxoSmithKline and Tesco re volunteer groups available to undertake projects in the village.

**Action: J. Allsop**

#### **d) Archiving of Parish Council minute books**

Mr. Poulton deposited the following documents at the County Archivist in Hertford on 16<sup>th</sup> February.

- 16 Volumes of Parish Council minutes dating from 1992 -2010
- 1 Jubilee accounts book dated 1977

## 8 Reports

### a) Sub-Committees

#### Budget & Finance

Mr. Filer reported on the following items.

- **Monthly accounts**

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

There were two amendments needed to the accounts.

- Kim Keen to be changed to Jim Keen
- Delete payment to Jarrards for the repair to fire alarm system at £116.60. Ashley Blinds have agreed to pay this invoice (refer to item 8 a, Community Hall - Damage to fire alarm).

Mr. Filer was please to report that the floodlighting donations will exceed the amount budgeted for 2010/11.

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

- **9-monthly inspection of accounts**

Mr. Meischke said that Mrs. McCash carried-out the nine-monthly inspection of the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts on the 7<sup>th</sup> March and the accounts were in good order.

- **Recording of Parish Council and Community Hall expenditure and income items**

At the February 2011 meeting, Parish Councillors agreed that a summarised version of the accounts be included in the minutes, and the Chairman should sign a copy of the approved accounts.

DCK Beavers Ltd e-mailed the Clerk on 14<sup>th</sup> February sending a link to the consultation document 'Code of recommended practice for local authorities on data transparency'.

Mr. Harris said that the Parish Council must be seen to show transparency in its recording of expenditure items. He proposed that the Parish Council includes the monthly accounts in the minutes but the wages and salaries should be recorded as a lump sum and not individually itemized. Mr. Filer seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

It was noted that the Government's preference for disclosure of those salaries in excess of £58,200.

Parish Councillors will continue to receive details of all salaries and wages in the monthly accounts when they are presented at each Parish Council meeting.

### Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

**Petty Cash – Receipts**

None

**Petty cash – Payments**

None

**Cheques issued**

Hertfordshire County Council	Lighting maintenance and energy charges - Oct - Dec 2010	355.93
East Herts Council	Emptying 3 dog waste bins 65 times from 01.04.10 - 31.03.11	485.78
Wages, Salaries, Allowances	March 2011	741.25
Re Virgin Media	Phone charges to 03.03.11	19.94
		<b><u>1602.90</u></b>

**Cheques received**

None

### Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

**Petty Cash – Receipts**

Floodlighting -	426.00
Barbara Smart – Pavilion hire	50.00
Jim Keen – Main Hall and Pavilion	80.00
Sharon Ling – Pavilion	12.00
	<b><u>568.00</u></b>

**Petty Cash –Payments**

D' Lamp bulbs and fitting for handle	<b><u>34.56</u></b>
	<b><u>34.56</u></b>

**Cheques issued**

Adrian Thompson	Decoration of the Pavilion	725.00
H M Revenue & Customs	VAT return - 01.11	338.18
Wages	February/March 2011	180.00
Npower	Gas supply to 1st March 2011	469.50
		<b><u>1712.68</u></b>

**Cheques received**

Becky Straker	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	48.00
Du Cros Court	Meeting room	7.50
Mr. Griffin	Meeting room	15.00
Ms. Mackenzie	Main Hall and Pavilion	39.00
Mrs. Whitten	Main Hall and Pavilion	56.00
		<b><u>165.50</u></b>

- **BDO audit briefing**  
Mr. Filer said that BDO have sent their audit briefing for the year 2010/11 and he had no comments to make.
- **End of year accounts**  
Mr. Filer said that he would not be at the April Parish Council meeting to approve the accounts and would therefore give his report to Mr. Meischke. He said the Parish Council need to agree the annual accounts, which will be presented at the Annual Parish meeting on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May.

### Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Meischke reported on the following items.

- **Decoration of the Pavilion**  
Adrian Thompson has completed the decoration work in the Pavilion and done an excellent job.
- **Fitting of new blinds for the Pavilion**  
The new Pavilion blinds were fitted on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> February. However, the work done is not satisfactory in that there are two different colours of materials used instead of one and some of the top blinds do not fit properly. Ashley Blinds have agreed to rectify the problem and Mr. Poulton is to meet with Richard Webb on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March, who has given his 100% assurance that all problems will be rectified.
- **Damage to fire alarm**  
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. Ashley Blinds have agreed to pay Jarrards Limited direct.
- **Repair to the damaged fire exit door in the changing room corridor**  
Brian Bunyan has made an excellent job of fitting an aluminium plate to the bottom part of the fire exit door, below the crash bar, to prevent the door panels being kicked out.
- **Replace small window panels in the Pavilion area**  
Brian Bunyan will finish replacing the small window panels with hardwood on either side of the fire exit doors in the Pavilion later this week.
- **Damage to Main door glass**  
Vandals smashed one of the bottom panes of glass in the Main entrance doors.  
Mr. Meischke obtained the approval of Mr. Smith, Mr. Filer and Mr. Knight to have this pane of glass, and the three other bottom panes of glass, replaced with hardwood. This will be in keeping with the double fire exit doors in the Pavilion. Brian Bunyan will be doing the work for approximately £160.
- **Review Community Hall Asset Register before insurance renewal on 1<sup>st</sup> April**  
At the September 2010 Parish Council meeting, it was agreed that the Asset Registers should be reviewed annually just before the insurance renewal dates. (The Community Hall insurance is due on 1<sup>st</sup> April and the Parish Council insurance is due on 1<sup>st</sup> June).  
The Clerk to e-mail Mr. Poulton the latest version of the Community Hall Asset Register.

**Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Poulton to confirm any changes required to the Community Hall Asset Register. **Action: N. Poulton**

- **To grit or not to grit**  
At the February Parish Council meeting it was agreed to seek the advice of Richard Slater (Village Hall Adviser, Community Development Agency for Hertfordshire), as to whether or not the Community Hall Trustees should supply grit bins with salt in them for hirers of the hall to use in bad weather.  
All Parish Councillors have been copied with Richard Slater's e-mail (dated 21<sup>st</sup> February), which reads reply as follows.

‘There is no problem with having grit bins.

Make it clear to all users that they will be responsible for spreading the grit.

If you as a committee start spreading grit you will then be responsible to do this every time it is required otherwise you may have insurance problems.’

Some Parish Councillors expressed concern about providing grit bins because young people may spread it all over the place for fun.

Mr. Harris said that legally we could be in difficulties because the Parish Council does own the land and therefore has a duty of care to make it safe for people who visit the area. He said he had recently presented a case where an authority accepted responsibility for a teacher who had fallen. Mr. Harris said that if conditions are icy, then we should arrange for the grit to be spread.

It was agreed to contact our insurance company asking them to confirm if we are covered by our liability insurance if we chose not to provide grit or spread it ourselves.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Car-park usage sign**

This item was discussed under 5 a, Review of actions - Chase Arro Signs re delivery of car-park usage sign.

### Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight had nothing to report.

### Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **E-mail to Tony Bradford (Countryside Management Service) re Lammas**

Mrs. Dinnin said that the Clerk e-mailed Tony Bradford (Countryside Management Services) on 1<sup>st</sup> March as follows.

‘Christine Dinnin has asked me to write to you to ask if you still run volunteer working party days.

Several years ago, you cut some steps on the bank of the Lammas; these are now in need of being cut out again, due to mud and general wear and tear. As you know these steps have been a great asset and are very much used, so it would be very much appreciated if you are able to help us in this way.’

Tony Bradford has not replied to this e-mail yet. Mrs. Dinnin said that the steps are now very dangerous. It was agreed that if no volunteer funding is available from the Countryside Management Services and no other volunteer workers can be found, that either Ted Brown or Adam Welch be instructed to carry-out these improvements.

- **Footpath 11 (at the rear of Watton House)**

Tom Goldsmith (Hertfordshire County Council, Rights of Way) estimates that we should include between three and four hundred pounds in our P3 grant for 2011/12 for work required to footpath 11, which runs behind Watton House.

- **Litter bin on the Lammas**

This item was discussed under 5 a, Review of actions - Find out who owns the litterbin that has appeared in the field by the Lammas.

### b) Routine reports

#### i) Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests

Jarrards Limited, who repaired the fire alarm equipment (refer to item 8 a, Community Hall - Damage to fire alarm) have quoted £120 plus VAT to test and inspect the fire alarm system and submit a Niceic certificate. Mr. Smith proposed the quotation be accepted and Jarrards Limited be asked to confirm how often this work should be carried-out (e.g. annually or every three years). Mr. Poulton seconded the motion and all present were in favour. **Action: J. Allsop**

#### ii) Monthly village-report

Mr. Smith completed the report on 5<sup>th</sup> March.

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

- **Cricket Shed surrounds**

Mr. Knight agreed to remind Rob Clayton (Chairman of the Cricket Club) to inspect the area around the Cricket Shed and to organise the removal of the rubbish as soon as possible. **Action: I. Knight**

- **See-saw**

There is a bolt missing from the see-saw. Mr. Meischke and Mr. Smith to inspect and take action as required. **Action: J. Meischke/ M. Smith**

- **Salt bins**

The following bins are empty or half-full.

- Perrywood Lane
- Entrance of Great Innings
- Great Innings South (outside number 93)
- Hazeldell

The Clerk to e-mail Hertfordshire Highways requesting that the bins are filled. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Bollards opposite War Memorial**

Mr. Poulton has asked Hertfordshire Highways to reinstate the wooden bollards that have been knocked over on the grass verge adjacent to the ornate village sign.

- **Litter**

Mr. Smith said that there are three or four black bags by the War Memorial, which he presumed were full of household waste. Mr. Poulton to investigate. **Action: N. Poulton**

iii) **Weekly sportsfield-report and action**

None.

v) **Website**

None.

v) **Website diary**

None.

## 9 Correspondence received

### a) Hertfordshire Highways – Parking restrictions on Moorymead Close

Lance Holman e-mailed (on 17<sup>th</sup> February) the revised plans for parking restrictions at Moorymead Close.

The original plans were revised following objections received during the public consultation period in November 2010. The changes are from all day parking restrictions to restricted parking between the hours of 1000 and 1200 with no weekend restrictions. The revised plans will prohibit train commuters being able to park in the area all day whilst still allowing visitors to Moorymead Close to park outside the restricted parking times.

The revised plans are now progressing to the formal consultation stage. This will commence on a date to be publicised through the use of site posters and an advert placed in the local paper.

Parish Councillors had no comments on the revised plans.

First Capital Connect is now charging commuters to use the parking bays at Watton-at-Stone station, which is currently causing further congestion in Moorymead Close.

### b) River Beane Restoration Association

Mr. Meischke read out a letter, dated 20<sup>th</sup> February 2011, from Mr. Dave Stimpson (Chairman, River Beane Restoration Association)

‘We appreciate the continuing support received from Parish Councils of villages in or near the Beane Valley.

With the change in government, there will be change of approach to the problems of the rivers in the region. The East of England Regional Assembly is ceasing to be involved and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) is assuming responsibilities. There was an inaugural meeting of an HCC working group in October 2010, which we hope will move things forward.

The World Wildlife fund (WWF) continues to be active. They are convening a meeting in London in March with the new minister for the Natural Environment (Richard Benyon), our MP (Oliver Heald) and several of the groups (including the RBRA) active in river matters.

Our annual budget is very small and a grant of £25, the same as last year, will be a great help in helping out activities.’

Mr. Filer proposed that we make a donation of £25. Mr. Poulton seconded the motion and all present were in favour. **Action: J. Allsop**

### c) East Herts Core Strategy Consultation

All Parish Councillors have been sent a copy of East Herts Council e-mail dated 1<sup>st</sup> March, thanking the Parish Council for responding to the East Herts Core Strategy Issue and Option Consultation (September-November 2010).

## 10 Village organisations

- **Watton Youth Drop Inn**

Watton Youth Drop Inn is holding its AGM on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> April in the Bull Public House.

- **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**

In the absence of Mrs. McCash, Mr. Filer reported on items concerning the Watton-at-Stone War Memorial Hall.

- A Fire risk assessment has been carried-out.
- There is a dispute with Chubb Fire Limited re the fire equipment
- The flooring will be refurbished and recoated with varnish during the summer.

- **Independent remuneration panel**  
Mr. Filer said that the Independent Remuneration Panel have made their recommendations, which were accepted with minor amendments by the District Council.
- **Watton-at-Stone Pre-School Playgroup**  
Mrs. Dinnin said that the Pre-school Playgroup is running well and their finances are in good order despite the loss of funding for three year olds.
- **Watton-at-Stone Scout & Guide Group**  
Mr. Poulton reported that the Scout and Guide Group will be holding its AGM on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March.
- **Watton-at-Stone Sports & Social Club:** Nothing to report.
- **Police Authority:** Nothing to report.
- **River Beane Restoration Association:** Nothing to report.

## 11 Items for Parish News

There was one item identified for inclusion in the April 2011 issue of the Parish News.

- Two Allotment plots available **Action: J. Allsop**
- **The meeting closed at 2040.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2011.**