

**Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2013**

**Present:** Mr. Michael Smith (Chairman) Mr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman)  
 Mrs. Christine Dinnin Mr. Denis Filer  
 Mr. Iain Harris Mr. Ian Knight  
 Mr. David Stock Ms. Emma Waltham  
 The Clerk (Mrs. Jane Allsop)

**Members of public:** Ken Crofton, District Councillor (arrived at 1922)

**1 Apologies for absence**

Leave of absence: Mr. Nigel Poulton.

Apologies for absence: Mrs. McCash.

**2 Public Participation**

None.

**3 Chairman'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 19<sup>th</sup> March 2013**  
 Parish Councillors approved the minutes.

**b) Review of actions**

1. **Arrange for Jim Morrissey to do the internal audit of the Parish Council accounts**  
 The Clerk will take the Parish Council accounts to Jim Morrissey for the internal audit on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> April. **Action: J. Allsop**
2. **Arrange for McCash and Hay to audit the Community Hall accounts**  
 This item is outstanding. **Action: J. Allsop**
3. **Arrange for the ferreting licenses to be renewed**  
 This item is outstanding **Action: J. Allsop**
4. **Arrange for the cottage site licence to be renewed**  
 This item is outstanding **Action: J. Allsop**
5. **Arrange meeting with Mr. and Mrs. Wilkinson on the Parish Council land at Rivershill**  
 Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Parish Council land at Rivershill.

**c) Action points resolved**

1. Produce leaflet re planned improvements to River Beane
2. Deliver leaflets to households backing onto the Lammas stretch of the River Beane
3. Write notice about River Beane and forward it to Mr. Knight for inclusion in the Parish News
4. Write to East Herts Council re planning application for Heath Mount School
5. Write to East Herts Council re planning application for 86 Hazeldell
6. Write to East Herts Council re notice outside 51c High Street
7. Inspect salt bins whilst carrying-out April monthly village-report
8. Give Parish Councillors revised accounts
9. Renew Community Hall insurance policy
10. Renewal of annual licence for live music and recorded music
11. Amend asset register and e-mail to all Parish Councillors
12. E-mail all Parish Councillors the BDO audit briefing
13. On receipt, e-mail all Parish Councillors revised proof for the playground sign

14. E-mail CVS application form to Mr. Stock for completion
15. Complete CVS application form and return to the Clerk for submission
16. Purchase barrier for end of car park wall
17. Pass information about the cost of the lighting column to Mr. Filer
18. Arrange for the purchase and installation of a lighting column at the Community Hall
19. Obtain revised quotation from Floodlighting Limited and e-mail to all Parish Councillors
20. Inspect sportsfield re maintenance requirements
21. **Ask Adam Welch to quote for weed-killing a meter wide strip on the allotments**  
 Mrs. Dinnin said that Adam Welch is not a fan of weed-killers. As he has an allotment adjacent to the area he was asked to weed kill, he would rather keep the area trimmed down to prevent weed growth. Parish Council agreed with this course of action. Mrs. Dinnin to instruct Adam Welch accordingly.  
**Action: C. Dinnin**
22. Inspect War Memorial gardens re dead Holly bush
23. Arrange for the repair of the broken MPPA fence support
24. Report missing rail at Mill Lane to Hertfordshire Highways
25. Contact Glyn Mould re ornate village sign
26. Write letter of complaint to Highways Department re condition of road repairs

## 6 Planning

### a) Applications

None.

### b) Decisions

None.

## 7 Specific items

### a) Logo copyright

This item was put on the agenda at the request of Mr. Smith

Mr. Stock reminded Councillors that the Logo was designed by a resident (Phil Berry) as part of a 'competition' initiated by the Parish Council. No prize was involved apart from us adopting the winning design as the Village Logo.

Although we have a section on our web site re the permitted use of the logo, the design is not covered by copyright. Mr. Smith said that we can licence the logo at cost of £70 for a period of 10 years. After discussion, it was agreed that we should do this and that Mr. Berry should be informed accordingly.

**Action: M. Smith**

### b) E-mail policy

Mr. Smith said that the Caroline McFarlane (Clerk to Tewin Parish Council) contacted our Clerk concerning e-mail policies. The Watton-at-Stone Parish Council do not actually have an e-mail policy however, all Parish Councillors are required to end e-mails sent out on Parish Council business as follows.

‘This e-mail is confidential and intended for the use of the individual to whom it is addressed.

Any views or opinions presented are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council.’

The Clerk to forward all Parish Councillors the e-mail, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> April, from Caroline McFarlane together with attachments.

**Action: J. Allsop**

Ken Crofton arrived at the meeting

Mr. Smith welcomed Ken Crofton to the meeting.

Mr. Crofton is a resident of Benington and a former Parish Council member for that area. He is currently an East Herts District Councillor and is standing for election as a County Councillor for the Hertford Rural on 2<sup>nd</sup> May to replace the current County Councillor, Bryan Hammond.

Mr. Crofton said that, if elected, it would be his privilege to support Watton-at-Stone in all relevant issues.

## 8 Sub-Committees

### Budget & Finance

Mr. Filer reported on the following items.

- **Monthly accounts**

<b>Watton-at-Stone Parish Council</b>		
<b>Petty Cash – Receipts</b>		<b>Petty cash - Payments</b>
Highways Locality Grant – paid in error into		None
Community Hall a/c	<u>39.80</u>	
	<u><b>39.80</b></u>	
<b>Cheques issued</b>		
Adam Welch	February leaf clearance	150.00
Wages	April 2013	229.10
Allotment & Garden Association	Public Liability insurance for Allotment Holders	<u>169.60</u>
		<u><b>548.70</b></u>
<b>Cheques received</b>		
Andrew May	Allotment rent	<u>13.25</u>
		<u><b>13.25</b></u>
<b>Watton-at-Stone Community Hall</b>		
<b>Petty Cash – Receipts</b>		<b>Petty Cash -Payments</b>
Floodlighting to 31.03.13	40.00	Highways locality grant – paid in error into Community Hall a/c
Sharon Ling – Pavilion	24.00	<u>39.80</u>
Jim Keen – Main Hall	10.00	<u><b>39.80</b></u>
Lisa Hayes – Pavilion	35.00	
Rowena Cannons- Main Hall and Pavilion	54.00	
Julie Gibbons – Pavilion - April to June	140.40	
Jo O'Brien – Main Hall and Pavilion	52.00	
Natalie Stichbury - Pavilion	21.00	
Chris Smith – Pavilion	<u>50.00</u>	
	<u><b>426.40</b></u>	
<b>Cheques issued</b>		
C & R Outdoor Lighting	lighting column	397.32
Wages	April 2013	260.1
Hertfordshire County Council	cleaning materials	<u>19.44</u>
		<u><b>676.86</b></u>
<b>Cheques received</b>		
Dave Boddy	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	336.60
Badminton Club	Main Hall hire	135.00
Mr. Holland (for Amelia Young)	Pavilion hire	<u>10.50</u>
		<u><b>482.10</b></u>

Parish Councillors approved the above payments.

Mr. Filer said that the Clerks salary is missing from the above accounts. Mrs. McCash has worked out the tax and NI for the Clerk's salary and housing allowance. Parish Councillors approved the payment of the Clerk's salary and housing allowance.

- **Parish Council and Community Hall 12-monthly statement of accounts for the year ended 2011/12**

Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of the Parish Council and Community Hall statement of accounts for the year ending the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013.

Mr. Filer went through the expenditure and income items for both the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts and explained the variations in the statements.

- **Parish Council**

There is an over-spend of £5038.16 on income minus expenditure. This would have been reduced by £1906.74 to an over-spend of £ 3131.42, if the VAT rebate had been paid. Unfortunately this amount was not paid until early April 2013 and therefore will appear in the 2013/14 accounts.

**Expenditure** - The Parish Council agreed an expenditure of £2244 to have gates installed at the East Herts Council play area on Great Innings.

Work to the Oak tree on the sportsfield, including fencing came to a total of £2684

The Queen's Jubilee Celebration cost £2041 in the financial year 2012/13. A further £3178 was spent in the year 2011/2 and grants received totalled £3,300, making the Parish Council's contribution towards the celebration £1,164, excluding VAT.

- **Community Hall**

There is an under-spend of £833.03 on income minus expenditure. The Community Hall received an insurance claim of £629 in March 2013 to repair the damaged brick wall, however the expenditure for the repair work will appear in the 2013/14 accounts.

Hiring costs were very slightly higher than the budgeted figures.

- **Summary of 12-monthly statement of accounts for the year ended 2011/12**

All Parish Councillors were given a copy of the summary 12-monthly statement of accounts for the Parish Council and Community Hall for the year ended 2012/13, which will be presented at the Annual Parish meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **CPRE – Membership renewal**

The annual CPRE subscription for 2013/14 is £29 (the same as for 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2012/13).

It was agreed to renew this membership.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **BDO Audit briefing (Winter 2013)**

All Parish Councillors have been e-mailed a copy of the BDO Winter 2013 Audit briefing Notes.

Mr. Filer said that he had read this document and was happy that the Parish Council is complying with the requirements. However, the Financial Risk Assessment should have been formally reviewed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013, refer to item below.

- **Financial Risk Assessment**

All Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of the Financial Risk Assessment (dated July 2009).

Mr. Filer said that the Financial Risk Assessment and internal control needs reviewing annually and this should have been done before the end of the last financial year, namely 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013. The Parish Council adopted Financial Regulations in October 2012, and as part of this process, did cover the items contained within the Risk Assessment. However, they did not formally review the Risk Assessment and internal control.

Mr. Filer proposed that no changes were required to the Financial Risk Assessment or the Internal Control of the Parish Council accounts. All Parish Councillors present at the meeting were in agreement.

The Risk Assessment and Internal Control to be reviewed again in March 2014.

**Agenda: 03/14**

- **Asset registers**

Parish Councillors approved the 2013/14 Asset Registers for the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council and Watton-at-Stone Community Hall, as modified at the Parish Council meeting held in March 2013.

- **Parish Council insurance renewal**

Aon Limited has sent the insurance renewal papers for the Parish Council. Mr. Filer reminded Parish Councillors that a 3-years LTU was taken out with AON Limited in 2011 and it will expire in June 2014. The Premium for 2013/14 is £725.57, which is slightly lower than the £757.57 charged in 2012/13.

The Clerk will arrange to pay AON Limited before the insurance renewal date of 1<sup>st</sup> June.

**Action: J. Allsop**

## Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Meischke reported on the following items.

- **Minutes and report on meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2013**

The Trustees accepted the minutes, which were then signed by Mr. Meischke as a true record.

- **Extension to the Community Hall**

It is becoming increasingly important to provide storage for the chairs, tables and other items currently housed in the Pavilion so that hirers can make maximum use of the space available. Consideration also needs to be given to the temporary storage of prams and pushchairs, i.e. as required during periods of hire. The recommendation to the Parish Council is that the Trustees meet with Trevor Blacktin to discuss the requirements with a view to asking him to prepare detailed plans and cost-estimates. However, prior to the preparation of detailed plans, an outline drawing will be produced and presented to the Parish Council for comment and approval. Mr. Meischke confirmed that at this initial stage there are no cost implications because work on detailed drawings etc. will not happen until Parish Councillors approve the basic design of the proposed extension. Mr. Stock said that although the proposed extension is a 'wish-list' item, which needed to be prioritized along with others, we would need detailed drawings to be available for the purpose of estimating the costs involved and seeking grants.

Parish Councillors approved the recommendation.

- **Damage to brick wall adjacent to the Community Hall**

Mark Blacktin has rebuilt the brick wall and installed the new barrier. Subsequently, he was asked to raise the concrete area around the manhole cover to remove a trip hazard. Mark has now done this by laying a membrane over the area involved and applying concrete over it. Trevor Blacktin (the Chartered Surveyor involved in the building of the Community Hall) has assured Mr. Meischke that the membrane will stop the concrete from cracking. Although there is nothing in writing, Mr. Blacktin has assured Mr. Meischke

that if the membrane fails to stop the raised area from cracking, he will carry-out repair works at no charge.

- **6-monthly check**  
It was agreed to add trip hazards to the 6-monthly check. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Sportsfield playground sign**  
Mr. Meischke said that he had collected the playground sign and will install it later this week. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Floodlighting charges**  
Mr. Knight has produced a detailed break-down of the floodlighting energy costs. This will be discussed when the Trustees meet in July. **Trustees agenda: 07/13**
- **Outside lighting and CCTV**  
The lighting column has been installed, by Blue Bury Contractors, half-way between the play area and the Community Hall, adjacent to the railway sleepers on the sportsfield side.  
Mr. Meischke has instructed D. P. Electrics to connect the column to the Community Hall's outside lighting system.
- **Pavilion chairs**  
Although it was agreed that new seating is required in the Pavilion, it was felt that ideally any such purchase should be considered after the proposed extension to the Community Hall had been completed.
- **Child-protection policy**  
Mr. Stock is to review the Community Hall's Child-protection policy by comparing it to one supplied by CVS for Broxbourne and East Herts. **Action: D. Stock**
- **Appointment of a Trustees**  
The Trustees agreed to regularise the appointments of the existing Trustees and appointment of Mr. Harris by means of appropriate documentation, and if needed, a Deed of Amendment under Clause Z to make clear that only members of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council could be appointed Trustees and that such appointments should be made and or ratified at the first meeting of the Trustees in each municipal year.

### Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **Sportsfield maintenance**  
Mr. Knight, met with Mr. Smith (in his capacity as representative of Bluebury Contractors) to discuss the sportsfield maintenance.  
Mr. Smith said that last year all that was done to the sportsfield was to grass seed the goalmouths and put down fertiliser. He said that the sportsfield is in good condition and that he would be grass seeding the goalmouths and fertiliser the field before the end of April. **Action: M. Smith**
- **MPPA Surface**  
As reported at the Parish Council meeting held in March, Sports Courts quotation has been accepted and a 25% deposit of £1200 has now been paid for the MPPA pressure-washing, surfacing-bonding and painting plus lines. This work was expected to start at the end of March but has been delayed due to the weather conditions. Water required to clean the MPPA surface will come from the water stopcock on the sportsfield.
- **Floodlighting bulb replacement**  
As instructed at the March Parish Council meeting, Mr. Knight obtained a revised quotation from Floodlighting Limited for the replacement of two floodlighting bulbs (the failed bulb and the working bulb) on the same lighting column.

Labour/Travel	£160.00
1 no lamps at £60	£60.00
1 no lamp at £120	<u>£120.00</u>
	<u>£340.00</u> plus VAT

Floodlighting Limited's quotation was e-mailed to all Parish Councillors for their approval. Mr. Knight has subsequently accepted Floodlighting Limited's quotation.

### Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **War Memorial Garden**  
Mrs. Dinnin said that the Holly bushes have definitely been eaten by animals. The Sun Dance shrubs and other shrubs appear not to have been affected. Mrs. Dinnin said that she had spoken to a staff member from Watton nursery, who suggested that the Holly bushes may grow back. He suggested that they were eaten by animals because of the shortage of food during the snowy weather. Adam Welch will be inspecting the garden regularly and will report back to Mrs. Dinnin.

- **River Beane Lammas Project**

Mrs. Dinnin said that Charlie Bell has arranged a site meeting, on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May at 1830, on the Lammas. Mrs. Dinnin said she has hand delivered leaflets inviting all residents whose properties back onto the River Beane along its stretch with the Lammas to this meeting and afterwards for discussions at 1930 at Community Hall. All members of the public will be welcome to attend the meeting at the Community Hall. Mr. Smith has agreed to chair the meeting.

- **Parish Council land at Rivershill**

Mr. Meischke and Mr. Smith met again with Mr. and Mrs. Wilkinson re their tree that has fallen down onto Parish Council land and the issue of their hedge, which is significantly overgrowing the footpath in Rivershill.

Mr. Wilkinson has had the hedge cut back by approximately six inches and intends to cut it back in stages so that it retains its green foliage.

As previously reported, Mr. and Mrs. Wilkinson did not accept Adam Welch's quotation because they said they could get the work done cheaper elsewhere. Mr. Meischke explained the Parish Council's reasons for not forwarding him the cheapest quotation they had received, because they had no experience of the work from this particular contractor.

Mr. Smith met with Mr. Taylor of 48 Rivershill, to discuss why he had not removed the rubbish dumped on the Parish Council land by his gardener. Mr. Smith said that since his meeting, Mr. Taylor has started to clear the rubbish and has written stating that he will clear the remainder of the rubbish and re-install the fence panels that have fallen down. He did claim that the Parish Council had restrictions on entry to their land. However, on checking the land registry, the Parish Council does have a right of access to its land.

- **E-mail from a resident in Rivershill**

Mr. and Mrs. Humby of 34 Rivershill have e-mailed to raise their concerns about the Wilkinson's hedge overhanging the footpath in Rivershill and the hedge overhanging the Bull public house end of the footpath between the High Street and Rivershill. Mr. Meischke said that the latter hedge is growing about 5 feet into the Bull's car park. He agreed to talk to the owners of the Bull in the first instance before contacting the owners of this hedge.

**Action: J. Meischke**

The Clerk to e-mail Mr. and Mrs. Humby informing them of Mr. and Mrs. Wilkinson course of action concerning their hedge and that the Parish Council are investigating who is responsible for cutting back the hedge that is overgrowing the footpath between the High Street and Rivershill.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Ornate village sign**

Mrs. Dinnin reported that photos of the Ornate village sign have been e-mailed to Glyn Mould, who carved the sign in 2004.

- **New bench on the Lammas**

The new bench donated by the Watton Ramblers has been installed on the Lammas.

**b) Routine reports**

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

Mr. Meischke and Mr. Smith carried-out the emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests prior to the meeting.

**ii) Monthly village-report**

Ms. Waltham completed the report on 16<sup>th</sup> April.

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

- **Salt bins** – Ms. Waltham and Mr. Smith have inspected all the salt bins in the village.

Mr. Smith said that he had removed and disposed of the broken salt bin from outside the BT exchange adjacent to the former Watton-at-Stone public house on the High Street. This bin was believed to have belonged to the former Waggon and Horses public house.

- **Mill lane fence** – the missing rail on the post and rail fence at Mill Lane has been replaced.

- **Community Hall car park** – the disabled car parking sign is missing. Mr. Meischke said that there is a replacement sign in the Community Hall storeroom. Mr. Meischke to install the new sign.

**Action: J. Meischke**

**iii) Weekly sportsfield**

Mr. Meischke reported that over the weekend alcohol bottles had been smashed around the sportsfield children's play area. Large chunks of glass were deposited on the child swings seats. Ted Brown cleared up a lot of the broken glass and Mr. Meischke and Mr. Smith cleared up more glass from the site.

It was agreed to report this incident to the police.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**iv) Website**

None.

**v) Website diary**

None.

**vi) Highway and Lighting faults**

Mr. Stock said that further to his detailed audit of the potholes in Hazeldell and the subsequent report to Hertfordshire Highways, he is somewhat mystified by the response. Many of the problems remain unresolved and are getting worse. He cannot understand why he has seen a repair team drive past/over and ignore some reported-potholes to repair others. It appears that money is being wasted because teams have to make return visits to repair potholes only when they have increased in size. Surely, it is better to resolve all the problems in one visit and therefore maximise the use of the repair team being on-site.

It was agreed to write to Hertfordshire Highways giving examples (including photographs) of the problems and apparent waste of money, and requesting a response. **Action: D. Stock**

Hertfordshire Highways were very late informing the Parish Council of the closure of the A602, i.e. they e-mailed the Clerk the day after repair works had started. It was agreed to write a separate letter to Hertfordshire Highways about the short notice given on road closures in this area and requesting that in future notice is given well in advance of the event. **Action: J. Allsop**

**9 Correspondence received****a) HAPTC - planning your future for Community Planning in Hertfordshire - meeting on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2013**

Mr. Smith said that he would be attending the HAPTC meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> May and would give his report to the Parish Council at its next meeting.

**b) East Herts Council re notice outside 51c High Street**

East Herts Council have written stating that they will be looking into our request for the removal of the notice outside 51c High Street.

This item to remain on the Parish Council agenda until the matter has been resolved.

**Agenda: 05/13**

**10 Village organisations**

- **Wotton-at-Stone War Memorial Hall Management Committee**

Mr. Stock said that he would be attending the next meeting of the War Memorial Hall Management Committee, which is scheduled to take place tomorrow (17<sup>th</sup> April).

- **Wotton-at-Stone Scout & Guide Group:** Nothing to report.

- **Wotton Youth Drop Inn**

Mr. Meischke said that Youth Club attendance continues to be low, however there are sufficient volunteers willing to run the club. An advertising campaign has been put in place and structured events that will not cost too much are being organised. Consideration is being given to opening the club during the summer holidays.

- **River Beane Restoration Association:** Nothing to report.

- **Wotton-at-Stone School Governors:** Nothing to report.

- **Wotton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Watch:** Nothing to report.

- **Wotton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association**

Mrs. Dinnin said that the Allotment and Garden Association will be holding its AGM at 2000 on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May in the Community Hall. However, they are having problems forming a committee and the future of the association is uncertain. They are continuing with their plans to hold a Horticultural show later this year.

**Note:** Since this report, the Allotment and Garden Association have cancelled its AGM.

- **Wotton-at-Stone Pre-School Playgroup**

Mrs. Dinnin said that she had spoken to Julia Donger about the Pre-School Playgroup and was informed her that there is no a problem with the finances of the group or attendance. However, there have been lots of changes in the committee members and they are currently seeking someone to take over the management of the Pre-School Playgroup as a business venture.

- **Wotton-at-Stone Sports & Social Club:** Nothing to report.

- **Police Authority:** Nothing to report.

**11 Items for Parish News**

No items were identified for inclusion in the May 2013 issue of the Parish News.

- **The meeting closed at 2050.**

- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2013.**