

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 21st January 2014

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

Members of public:

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence: None.

2 Public Participation

None.

3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

None.

4 Declaration of Interests

Mr. Stock declared a personal interest in item 6ai, planning application - 66 Rivershill (in so much as his daughter is married to a son of the applicant).

Mr. Meischke declared a personal interest in item 6ai, planning application - 66 Rivershill (Mr. Meischke lives at 64 Rivershill).

5 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 17th December 2013**
Parish Councillors approved the minutes.

b) Review of actions

1. **Confirm date of Conservation Area Character Appraisal exhibition**
Rebecca Mason (Assistant Conservation Officer, East Herts Council) e-mailed on 24th December to confirm that the date of the public meeting, regarding the Watton-at-Stone Conservation Area Appeal, will be on Friday 7th March in the Community Hall.
2. **Contact Ian Sharratt re use of S106 funding at the Great Innings Play area:** Outstanding
Action: E. Waltham
3. **Ask Rik Sharma and Ken Crofton for their Councillor posters for the notice boards**
The Clerk said she had received posters from Ken Crofton was but still awaiting some from Rik Sharma.
The Clerk to chase
Action: J. Allsop

c) Action points resolved

1. Forward December Parish Council minute re Traffic along Station Road to Highways department
2. **Confirm East Herts Council grant to be offset against 2014/15 precept**
Refer to item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee - Precept 2014/15.
3. Renew SLCC annual membership
4. Ask Mr. Meischke to speak to the cleaner about the Pavilion floor
5. **Find out when the Community Hall last had the flooring professionally cleaned**
The Community Hall floors was last professionally cleaned in 2003.
Mr. Meischke said he was in the process of contacting professional cleaners.
Action: J. Meischke
6. **Put up sign at MPPA to validate the Tennis Club's LTA insurance**
Mr. Knight said he had put up the sign today. However a more permanent sign needs to be purchased.
Action: I. Knight
7. **Obtain cost of material needed at War Memorial garden and obtain quotation for doing the work:**
Outstanding
Action: C. Dinnin

d) Items outstanding for more than two months

1. **Invoice Sports and Social club for additional keys supplied** - outstanding. **Action: J. Allsop**
The Clerk said that Michael Lewis (A. P. Access) had not invoiced for the external door keys yet and therefore she cannot invoice the Sports and Social Club.
2. **Obtain quotations for tennis net winder mechanism** - outstanding. **Action: I. Knight**
3. **Obtain quotations for new tennis nets**
Mr. Knight said that the tennis net cost is £89.94 including VAT plus £10 delivery.
On Mr. Knight's instructions, the Clerk ordered two nets from Newitts, via the internet and made payment on her credit card. Parish Councillors approved the payment and agreed that the Clerk could be reimbursed the cost incurred.
4. **Obtain quotations for the painting of the high-level windows and some external doors**
Mr. Meischke said he had obtained one quotation to date from Devine Decoration Services. The Clerk to e-mail all Parish Councillors a copy of this quotation. **Action: J. Allsop**
Mr. Meischke said he would pursue an additional quotation, but was having difficulty in finding contractors who are interested in doing the work. **Action: J. Meischke/J. Allsop**
5. **Investigate sites for additional football pitches**
This item is ongoing. **Action: M. Smith**
6. **Complete gift aid paperwork**
Mrs. McCash said that the Community Hall has not received any individual donations. The Parish Council has received some small donations towards the play area, but the larger amount received was from a trust fund and not an individual, so gift aid does not apply.
Mrs. McCash said that the gift aid paperwork is complex and currently not worth doing. However, if the Community Hall should receive any large donations from an individual in the future, the Community Hall can register for gift aid and claim back any money provided it is within the same financial year. Mrs. Stanley, who completes the gift aid paperwork for Presdales School, backed up Mrs. McCash's statement. Parish Councillors agreed not to pursue this item until it is required.
7. **Draft a letter to the Police Commissioner for Parish Council approval**
Mrs. McCash said that this item remains outstanding. However, the concerns raised back in July 2013 are no longer relevant as the police are carrying out regular patrols within the village.
After discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council should write to the Police Commissioner expressing their concerns about the current drug and vandalism problems within the village. Mrs. McCash agreed to draft the letter and e-mail it to all Parish Councillors for their comments. **Action: H. McCash**
Mrs. McCash said she would be attending the next Police Locality meeting on 29th January.

6 Planning

Mr. Harris reported on the following items

a) Applications

i) 66 Rivershill, Watton-at-Stone (3/13/2242/FP)

Two-storey rear extension with single-storey extensions to side and rear.

Although Mr. Harris made a site-visit to 66 Rivershill, he was unable to see the areas where the extensions are proposed. This was because the areas cannot be seen from the street view.

Mr. Knight visited the residents of 68 Rivershill and said that they are unhappy about the close proximity of the rear extension to their property and the possible loss of light it would cause. He also contacted the residents of White House Close whose boundaries adjoin 66 Rivershill. The residents of 3 White House Close are concerned about the close proximity of the extension to their boundary and that the chimney stack is close to their bedrooms.

Mr. Knight said that he had suggested to the residents of 68 Rivershill and 3 White House Close that they write directly to the planning department to make their individual objections known.

After viewing the plans and discussing the application, the Parish Council agreed to write to the planning department to express concerns about the nature and extent of the development, and that it had received expressions of concern from residents who will be affected by the proposed development.

Action: J. Allsop

ii) Heath Mount School, Woodhall Park, Watton At Stone, SG14 3NG (3/13/2143/FP)

Erection of freestanding tensile fabric canopy within play area to pre-prep/nursery school (retrospective)

In accordance with the Parish Council's Planning Protocol, Mr. Harris liaised with Mr. Stock, Mr. Smith and Ms. Waltham and it was agreed by them that the Parish Council should send a 'No comment' response to the planning department. The Clerk was instructed to write to East Herts Council accordingly.

b) Decisions**i) The Old Chapel, Whempstead Road, Whempstead, Herts, SG12 0PL (3/13/1941/FP)**

Replacement of existing flat roof with semi-pitched/part flat roof and extension of existing balcony to allow access to the roof area
-East Herts Council permission granted

ii) 51c High Street (3/13/1140/FP)

Single storey front and two storey side extension
-East Herts Council permission refused

Mr. Smith read out the planning department's reasons for refusal as follows.

'The proposed two storey side extension, by reason of its siting and design, would be unsympathetic and detrimental to the character and appearance of the dwelling and adjoining dwellings and would cause harm to the setting of the Watton at Stone Conservation Area. The proposal is thereby contrary to Policies ENV1, ENV5, ENV6 and BH6 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007 and the National Planning Policy Framework.'

Mr. Stock said that he had noted that the draft planning-document currently on Parish Council circulation makes a reference to a right-to-light and to a view. He asked all present to take a look at this particular section (which he has highlighted on the front of the document) because it appears that we can now comment on the effect that a proposed development would have on adjacent properties in terms of its impact on light and/or view. This seems to be contrary to what has happened previously when we were given to understand that a loss of light and/or view were not valid reasons to object to an application.

7 Specific items**a) Traffic along Station Road and the High Street**

As agreed at the Parish Council meeting in December, the Clerk forwarded the minute re Traffic along Station Road, via e-mail, to Mrs. Rosemary Chatindo (Highways Agency), County Councillor Ken Crofton and District Councillor Rik Sharma. Mrs. Chatindo forwarded the Parish Council's e-mail to Paul Chappell (Development Manager, Highways, HCC).

Attached are the following.

- E-mail from Paul Chappell to the Parish Council dated 9th January 2014.
- E-mail from Mr. Smith (via the Clerk's e-mail address) to Ken Crofton (County Councillor) Rik Sharma (District Councillor) and all Watton-at-Stone Parish Councillors. **See attached**

b) Agreement for use of land adjacent to Beane Cottage

Mr. Smith said that Mr. and Mrs. Taylor wrote on 20th January requesting the renewal of the licence agreement for use of Parish Council land adjacent to their property, Beane Cottage.

Parish Councillors agreed to renew the licence and enclose a covering letter to remind them that clause 2 of the agreement states: "This Licence is a personal one to Mr. and Mrs. Taylor and shall not be capable of assignment sale or any other disposal whatsoever." Beane Cottage is currently on the market for sale. The sale of their property will end the agreement they have with the Parish Council. The new owners will need to apply to the Parish Council for a new agreement, which may or may not be granted.

The Clerk to draft the covering letter and e-mail it to Mr. Harris' for his comments. **Action: J. Allsop/I. Harris**

The new licence and covering letter to be sent to Mr. and Mrs. Taylor. **Action: M. Smith/J. Allsop**

c) Agree meeting dates for the Civic Year 2014/2015

It was agreed that Parish Council meetings shall continue to be held on the third Tuesday in the month, namely:

- Tuesday 20th May 2014
- Tuesday 17th June 2014
- Tuesday 15th July 2014
- Tuesday 16th September 2014
- Tuesday 21st October 2014
- Tuesday 18th November 2014
- Tuesday 16th December 2014
- Tuesday 20th January 2015
- Tuesday 17th February 2015
- Tuesday 17th March 2015
- Tuesday 21st April 2015

The Parish Council meeting on the 20th May 2014 will be preceded by the Annual Parish Meeting (starting at 1900) and the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

d) Update Village Directory

All Parish Councillors were e-mailed, on 3rd January 2014, the latest version of the Watton-at-Stone Village Directory and they have forwarded their amendments to the Clerk.

It was agreed that the Village Directory should be included in the March 2014 issue of the Parish News. The Clerk to contact all entries in the current Village Directory asking them to confirm that their details are correct and make updates as required. The final version to be given to Mr. Knight for printing. **Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Knight to arrange for the Village Directory to be included in the Parish News. **Action: I. Knight**

e) Sports and Social Club hire agreement

Parish Councillors agreed to renew their annual agreement with the Sports and Social Club for the use of specified Sports Facilities within the Village **Action: J. Allsop**

f) Section S106 funding

• **Sportsfield Play area**

The Watton-at-Stone Playground Working-Group have been awarded a BIFFA grant of just under £10,000 towards stage two of the sportsfield play area improvements. There are now approximately £20,000 of funds in place towards new playground equipment and improvements.

The plans for the play area improvements have been revised. The current site of the two spring sit-ons will have new safety surface installed level with the adjacent grass. A tree castle will be installed in place of the spring sit-ons.

A sling swing and a more challenging climbing frame is planned on the grass area beyond the teen shelter and a zip wire beyond the oak tree.

- **The Cricket Club** have been successful in their East Herts Council grant application for £8000 towards new equipment.

• **Bus shelters**

Parish Councillors agreed Mr. Smith's suggestion to submit a bid from the S106 transport funding for bus shelters in the High Street. **Action: M. Smith**

• **Parish Council notice board for Station Road**

Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke agreed to look at possible locations for a Parish Council notice board in Station Road. Mr. Smith said he has two notice boards that might be suitable. **Action: M. Smith**

8 Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

Mr. Filer reported on the following items.

• **Monthly accounts**

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council			
Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty cash - Payments	
1 Allotment holders	<u>13.40</u>	J. Allsop – phone calls to 3/10/14	22.99
	<u>13.40</u>	J. Allsop – phone calls to 3/11/14	23.77
		J. Allsop – phone calls to 3/12/14	<u>23.65</u>
			<u>70.41</u>
Cheques issued			
Wages and salaries	December 2013		1038.09
Adam Welch	Additional leaf clearance		60.00
RBRA	Annual donation		25.00
SLCC	Annual Subscription		129.00
Post Office Limited	Tax & NI		195.48
Jim Morrissey	Internal Audit fee		100.00
Bluebury Contractors	rotovate 2 allotments and weed kill		114.00
St Albans Diocesan of Finance	Glebe rent - Allotments		<u>300.00</u>
			<u>1961.57</u>
Cheques received			
Allotment holders	2 Allotment rent 2013/14 and new tenant deposit payments		<u>126.50</u>
			<u>126.50</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts

Floodlighting donations 19.11.13 to 09.01.14	360.00
Kelly Exton – Main Hall and Pavilion	56.00
Paul Reid – Meeting room	6.00
Vicki Roos – Meeting room	42.00
Fiona Richardson – Main Hall and Pavilion	65.00
Carla Beach – Pavilion and meeting room	<u>159.00</u>
	<u>688.00</u>

Petty Cash -Payments

Wickes – brackets and screws	<u>15.00</u>
	<u>15.00</u>

Cheques issued

Wages	December 2013	379.25
Mark Blacktin	Install 2 shelves in internal storeroom	<u>68.00</u>
		<u>447.25</u>

Cheques received

Lisa Seal	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	106.50
School	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	864.67
Watton Ramblers	Pavilion hire	7.00
Badminton Club	Main Hall hire	175.50
Miss Green	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	52.00
Claire Morrisson	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	<u>39.00</u>
		<u>1244.67</u>

Parish Councillors approved the above payments.

• **9-monthly statement of accounts for the Parish Council and Community Hall**

Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of the 9-monthly statement of accounts for the period ending the 31st December 2013.

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

Parish Council Accounts

Expenditure

Some of the expenditure items are total payments for the year and no further payments will be made in the final quarter.

Allotment maintenance is over budget but the income should cover expenditure. This excludes the £600 expenditure made to the St. Albans Diocesan Board of Finance Glebe for Allotment ground rent.

Purchase of the new Supernova piece of play equipment is covered by grants and donations. The VAT element will be reclaimed.

Only 50% of the annual grant to Community Hall has been paid to date. A decision on paying the remaining 50% will be made before the end of the financial year (namely: before 31st March 2014).

If the purchase of the supernova is removed from the expenditures items, the overall expenditure for the 9-month period is 75.4%.

Income

The total income, excluding donations and grants received for the supernova is higher than budgeted because the VAT rebate figure is twice the budgeted figure.

Allotments plots are currently being allocated to new tenants and therefore some more income is expected.

The income minus expenditure figure is £15,128 at the end of the 9-month period. This excess can be explained by the total precept for the year having been paid, a £3,327 new homes bonus payment, £900 additional VAT refund and 50%, of the Community Hall grant has not yet been paid.

Community Hall

Expenditure

Administration	this is higher than expected due to the purchase of computer software and the annual music licence
Council tax	Represents 9 out of 10 payments due for the year.
Gas and electricity	These are both under budget for the time of year, however the winter quarters payments have not yet been submitted.
Maintenance	725% of budget due to the repair of the car park wall, installation of a steel hoop, fitting a new lighting column and alterations to the internal and external storerooms.
MPPA Maintenance	£3600 for surface bonding – this money has been taken out of reserves.

Income

Main Hall	just above 75% of the annual budget at 78%
Pavilion	above 75% of the annual budget at 110%

Income minus expenditure is a negative of £7,885 at the end of the 9-month period.

- **Floodlighting charges**

Mr. Filer said that the 2013/14 budget figure of £1900 for floodlighting was based on an increase in the hourly charge for the floodlighting. After investigation by Mr. Knight, on the hourly charges made for floodlighting versus the cost of consumption of electricity, it was agreed in September 2013, not to increase the floodlighting hourly charges. Therefore, the floodlighting income is very likely to have a shortfall of between £400/£500. Currently the total income at the 9-month period is slightly lower than for the same period in 2012/13.

Mr. Filer said that the draft budget for 2014/15 shows a floodlighting budget figure of £1900. He therefore proposed that this figure be reduced by £400. This was agreed by Parish Councillors. The Parish Council grant to the Community Hall will therefore be increased by £400 as will the Parish Council precept.

- **9-monthly inspection of accounts**

Mrs. McCash said that she carried-out the 9-month inspection of the Parish Council and Community Hall, accounts on 20th January, and they were in good order.

A copy of Mrs. McCash's reports to be included in the Community Hall and Parish Council accounts for 2013/14.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Precept 2014/15**

It was agreed to amend the precept requirement for 2014/15 to £28,746 (£29,990 minus the East Herts Council grant of £1,244). This is an increase of 4.25% on the precept for 2013/14. Mr. Filer reminded Parish Councillors that East Herts have halved their grant, which was £2488 in 2013/14.

The Clerk said she had been verbally informed by East Herts Council that the grant of £1,244 will be payable to the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council, however she will seek e-mail confirmation.

Action: J. Allsop

The Precept forms, to be signed by Mr. Smith and Mr. Filer and countersigned by the Clerk.

The completed precept form to be returned to East Herts Council.

Action: J. Allsop

Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Harris reported on the following items

- **Report and minutes of meeting held on 14th January 2014**

Mr. Harris said that the Community Hall Board of Trustees met on 14th January, all Parish Councillors have been sent a copy of the minutes, which will be approved at the next meeting of the Community Hall Board of Trustees.

- **Child protection policy**

Mr. Harris said that he had established that the Parish Council and Community Hall need a Child Protection Policy.

This item to be placed on the February Parish Council meeting for discussion.

Agenda: 02/2014

- **Cricket Club hiring times**

Mr. Meischke to speak to Wilf Emsley about the Cricket Club usage of the Pavilion and kitchen facilities at the Community Hall.

Action: J. Meischke

Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **MPPA**

Mr. Knight said that as reported earlier, the tennis nets are on order and he is obtaining prices for the replacement tennis net winder mechanism.

The MPPA surface is in very good condition following the bonding and repainting work carried out in August 2014.

- **Sportsfield**

Nothing to report.

Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Lammas**

Mrs. Dinnin, Mr. Smith and Mr. Knight met on site at the Lammas with Charlie Bell (Living Rivers Officer) and John Bryden (Environment Agency) to discuss the improvements to the Lammas stretch of the River Beane.

Mr. Smith made Charlie Bell and John Bryden aware that there are S106 funds available for environmental projects from the building of the Station Road development, 'Gatekeeper Meadow'.

John Bryden said with the funds available it would enable part of the River Beane to be diverted via the Mill Pond. The Mill Pond would need extensive dredging. He agreed to draw up plans and costings for the project. If the flow of the river is diverted, there will no longer be a necessity to notch the wear adjacent to the old Mill site.

John Bryden said that under current regulations the Mill site could not be converted to a residential development.

The Lammas riverbank will need to have its trees pollarded on a regular basis. The riverbank should have 2/3 of shading from plant growth and the remaining 1/3 should be left open. There will be a large cost for removing all the debris of fallen trees along the Lammas stretch of the river. Improvements and maintenance to the area will go to consultation.

b) Routine Reports

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

Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke to arrange to do the emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests after the meeting. **Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke**

- ii) **Monthly village-report**

Mr. Meischke completed the report on 19th January 2014.

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

- **Sportsfield** - due to the very wet conditions, if further rain falls on Friday, Mr. Meischke will inform the football clubs that all matches will need cancelling over the weekend.
- **Community Hall** - some painting required.
- **Community Hall Roof** – City Roofing have agreed to meet Mr. Meischke on site to look at repair work required to the roof. They will also be asked to refit one of the roof vents. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Disabled sign** – the disabled sign has been vandalised again. It was agreed that a disabled sign be painted on the tarmac rather than purchasing another metal sign Mr. Meischke to arrange for the work to be done. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **MPPA – west side of the MPPA needs leaf clearance.**
Mr. Meischke to ask Ted Brown to clear the leaves. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Culverts in Mill Lane** – the bricks are coming away from the wall and need repointing.
If the diversion works to the flow of the River Beane take place, the culverts would need repairing as part of the project.
- **Ornate village sign** – needs re-varnishing. This work is scheduled to be done by Bob Adams in the spring.
- **Benches** – the village benches will need re varnishing when the weather is warmer.
Some of the wooden seats could do with replacing with plastic ones. In particular, the broken seat outside the Grey house in the High Street. Funding for this seat could come out of the Gatekeeper Meadow S106 monies available for environmental projects or from one of the Highways budgets. Mr. Smith to investigate. **Action: M. Smith**
The condition of the benches to be reviewed in spring. **Agenda: 04/12**

- iii) **Weekly sportsfield**

None.

- iv) **6-monthly check of MPPA, Play Area on sportsfield and Community Hall equipment**

Mr. Meischke and Mr. Stock completed the report on 19th January 2014.

MPPA

- Kicker boards – two protruding screws
- Floodlight – south east light is in contact with the trees – no action required at present.

Community Hall

- **Chairs** - need replacing when funds are available.

v) **Website**

The Clerk to upload the updated version of the village directory.

Action: J. Allsop

vi) **Website diary**

None.

vii) **Highway and Lighting faults**

The Clerk to chase the following reported faults with the Highways department.

- Lighting column 22 on the footpath link in Hazeldell
- Lights out in Moorymead Close

If a successful outcome is not forthcoming, it was agreed to e-mail County Councillor Ken Crofton informing him of the situation and asking him to get the matter resolved as a matter of urgency

Action: J. Allsop

The Clerk to report standing water on the Walkern Road at its junction with High Elms Lane.

Action: J. Allsop

9 Correspondence received

a) **Independent examination of Hertfordshire Mineral and Waste Development Framework**

Parish Council noted receipt of this document and agreed that no response was necessary.

b) **Hertfordshire's Travel Plan Guidance for Business and Residential Development**

Parish Council noted receipt of this document and agreed that no response was necessary.

10 Village organisations

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

Mr. Stock is to attend the meeting of the War Memorial Hall Management Committee being held tomorrow (22nd January).

- **Watton-at-Stone Scout & Guide Group:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton Youth Drop Inn:** Nothing to report.
- **River Beane Restoration Association** Nothing to report.
- **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 Pre-School Playgroup:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-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 February 2014 issue of the Parish News.

- **The meeting closed at 2104.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 18th February 2014.**