

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 15th April 2014

Present: Mr. Michael Smith (Chairman) Mr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman)
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)

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence: Mrs. Christine Dinnin

2 Public Participation

Mr. Smith asked Mr. Stephen Carpanini if he wished to address the Parish Council. He was informed that this was the only part of the meeting during which he could make any comments.

Mr. Carpanini said that the draft District plan could be challenged on several aspects including the lack of freedom of information requests, which he intends to pursue personally. He touched on various other topics including his opinion on the lack of logic in group one and group two village expectations. Mr. Smith asked Mr. Carpanini to keep the Parish Council informed of his progress.

Parish Councillors agreed that the more support we can get from individuals who write in about the plan the better.

3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

None.

4 Declaration of Interests

Mrs. McCash declared a pecuniary interest in item 9 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee - External audit of Community Hall accounts for the year ended 2013/14 (Mrs. McCash is a partner at McCash and Hay).

Ms. Waltham declared a personal interest in item 7a, planning application – 54 Great Innings North (in so much as her boundary backs onto the applicants).

Mr. Filer declared a personal interest in item 9 a, Community Hall Trustees – Quotations for the painting of the top windows and external-toilet doors and storeroom doors (in so much as his son-in-law Peter Phillips has quoted to do the work).

5 Introduction to Sergeant Duncan Wallace

Mr. Smith welcomed Sergeant Duncan Wallace to the meeting and invited him to speak.

Sergeant Wallace introduced himself and explained his role. He said he reports directly to Chief Inspector Gerry McDonald, who is the District Commander for this area. The police have failed to keep the Parish Council informed of matters concerning the village and their intention from now on is to provide the Parish Council with monthly updates either by an officer attending a Parish Council meeting or by e-mailing the Clerk.

Sergeant Wallace gave the Parish Council a brief rundown on police activities over the past month, which have included some proactive patrols in the village with some successes in apprehending criminals.

In 2013, there was a periodic increase in crime levels compared with in 2012.

Sergeant Wallace left the meeting.

Mr. Stock said it would be a significant improvement if the police were to provide us with monthly reports.

6 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 18th March 2014**
Parish Councillors approved the minutes.

b) Review of actions

1. Chase HCC re request to install a notice board in Station Road

Mr. Smith said that the Parish Council's simple request to install their own notice board on Hertfordshire County Council land has got bogged down in bureaucracies.

After discussion, it was agreed to look at the location again and see if the resident whose fence backs onto Station Road and opposite the entrance to Gatekeeper Meadow, would approve a notice board being attached to their fence. Alternative locations along Station Road will be considered, including outside the new development, the Railway Station and on East Herts Council land adjacent to Rectory Lane.

Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke

Mr. Harris reported that there is a notice board at Whempstead that has Parish Council notices on it dating back to 2010. Former Parish Councillors, Mr. Charles Clark, had been actioned to remove the notice board following consultation with local residents, who were not interested in it being retained.

Mr. Smith agreed to remove the notice board

Action: M. Smith

2. Order sign for MPPA from 1st Call Signs

Refer to item 9 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee - MPPA – notices.

3. Amend Asset registers and e-mail to all Parish Councillors

Refer to item 9 a, Budget and finance - Asset Registers

4. Arrange for Jim Morrissey to audit the Parish Council accounts

Refer to item 9 a, Budget and finance - Internal Audit of Parish Council accounts

5. Arrange for McCash to audit the Community Hall accounts

Refer to item 9 a, Budget and finance - External audit of Community Hall accounts

6. Renew music license with PRS for music

The music PRS license is in the process of being renewed.

Action: J. Allsop

7. Inspect the sportsfield to agree a schedule of maintenance for this year

Refer to item 9 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee -Sportsfield and goal mouth maintenance.

8. Identify problem areas in Hazeldell so the Clerk can report them via the faults system

Mr. Stock e-mailed the Clerk a large list of kerbside faults in Hazeldell.

The Clerk has logged the faults onto the Highways faulting system as well as sending a letter via e-mail to Raj Goutam and cc both Ken Crofton and Rik Sharma.

9. Identify any road, footpath and lighting problems that need reporting in via the faults system

No faults have been identified by Parish Councillors.

10. Report Highways faults via the faults system

Refer to item 8 above.

c) Action points resolved

1. Put District Councillor poster on the Parish Council notices boards
2. Write to East Herts Council re planning application for 4 Newmans Court
3. Place notice in Parish News re Draft District Plan public meetings
4. Put up notices re Draft District Plan public meetings on notice boards
5. Chase East Herts Council re S106 funding for additional play equipment
6. Write to Debenhams Ottoway re lease for sportsfield extension
7. Write to Rebecca Mason (East Herts Council) re Conservation Area appraisal
8. Pay second grant instalment into Community Hall account
9. Renew Community Hall annual insurance
10. Contact deep cleaning contractors
11. Contact Devine Decoration Services re external decoration work
12. Check hire agreement re dogs in Community Hall
13. Put up 'No dogs except assistance dogs' at the Community Hall entrances
14. Contact Anthea and Bob Thornton re trial plantings on the Lammas
15. Give Mrs. Dinnin a copy of Glyn Mould's e-mail of instructions re vanishing the village sign
16. Pass Glyn Mould's instructions to Bob Adams
17. Upload article in memory of Nigel Poulton to website
18. Write parish news insert

d) Items outstanding for more than two months

1. Chase Hertfordshire County Council re S106 funding for bus shelters in the High Street
Paul Chappell has confirmed that HCC will be considering our funding request for bus shelters in the High Street.
2. Contact Heath Mount School re availability of their sporting facilities
This item to be removed from agenda.
3. Arrange for disabled sign to be painted on tarmac surface of the car park
Mr. Meischke said that he has instructed Mark Blacktin to paint a disabled sign on the tarmac surface of the car park.

7 Planning

Mr. Harris asked for Item 8d, Amendment to planning protocol and approval of draft letter re planning applications, to be dealt with here because it relates to the subsequent applications.

Mr. Harris pointed out that our agreed policy to object to the conversion of garages to living space, or other uses which involve the loss of an off-street parking space, should be documented in our planning protocol and asked Mr. Stock to take care of this. **Action: D. Stock**

Mr. Stock's proposal for a standard letter, to be used in cases where a Parish Councillor was unable to contact neighbours affected by a planning application, was approved by all present.

Mr. Stock to update the Parish Council's protocol for planning applications to include the use of this standard letter and the letter itself. **Action: D. Stock**

Mr. Harris reported on the following items.

a) Applications

i) 120 Hazeldell (3/14/0478/FP)

Part single and two storey rear extension. Replacement pitched roof at the front

Ms. Waltham tried to make contact with the neighbours on either side of 120 Hazeldell on several occasions but they were never at home.

In accordance with the Parish Council's Planning Protocol, Mr. Harris liaised with Mr. Stock and Ms. Waltham and they agreed that the Clerk be instructed to send a 'No comment' response to the planning department at East Herts Council. One of the neighbours already has a similar rear extension.

ii) 54 Great Innings North (3/14/0339/FP)

Garage conversion and single storey rear extension

Whilst the immediate neighbours had no concerns, as this application entailed a loss of off-street parking and therefore consequential rise in on-street parking, the Clerk was instructed to, and did send, the following response.

'We have considered this application and consulted with the immediate neighbours who have no concerns.

However, it is the policy of the PC to object to planning applications in the village which entail loss of parking space by conversion of garages.

As this application does entail loss of such space, for this reason the PC objects on the following grounds:

1. If granted it will result in the reduction of available off street parking and will consequently lead to an increase in on street parking.
2. On street parking has already increased dramatically within the village and continues to do so. This and other conversions of garages to living space will further exacerbate the situation.
3. There is already a serious shortage of parking space in Great Innings North, exacerbated by users of the station parking there. This has been subject of extensive complaints by residents to Hertfordshire Highways.'

iii) 67 Hazeldell (3/14/0479/FP)

Single Storey Front Extension

Mrs. McCash visited the residents either side of 67 Hazeldell, and they had no objections the application.

Mr. Harris said that Mr. Stock had pointed out to him that this application involves the conversion of a garage into living space and therefore the loss of a parking space. The Clerk was therefore instructed to write to East Herts Council as per item 8 a ii with the alteration in item 3 to refer to Hazeldell and not Great Innings North.

b) Decisions

i) 7 Moorymead Close (3/14/0126/FP)

Single storey rear extension

-East Herts Council permission granted

8 Specific items

a) Traffic along Station Road and the High Street

Mr Stock repeated his view that the issues in Station Road are NOT related to the speed of the traffic but more the increasing amount of traffic and traffic movements from source and destination junctions along that road, and the problems associated with an increasing number of pedestrians trying to safely cross it. He continued to say that this problem is not just related to school-term times but throughout the day, e.g., people crossing to access the commercial outlets in the village, sports and recreational facilities, playschool (and the soon to come early-years-centre), and the health services provided by the Watton Place Clinic.

He, together with the other Parish Councillors, feels that there is a definite case for some form of permanent crossing in the vicinity of the Station Road/Hazeldell junction, where the 'Lollypop' crossing' has been until recently, and that some form of improvement should be undertaken to the crossing-point at the top of the hill/blind bend. Currently this crossing point leads directly into the Rectory Lane carriageway and is used by

many to get to the adjacent post box, in addition to the same pedestrian destinations as those using the crossing point at the junction with Hazeldell.

As before, the concerns about Station Road are shared by all the Parish Councillors and the Council grows ever frustrated by the apparent lack of drive and progress that is being made by the local authority, not to mention the number of times this subject has been raised over the years. We were lead to believe that the traffic/pedestrian issues in Station Road could be resolved by means of the Section 106 funding that would come from the Gatekeeper Meadow development. There is now a fear that this funding will be consumed by other things and we will be left with the ever-increasing inconveniences experienced on a daily basis. As a matter of interest, it has been noted that there appears to be an increase in the number of episodes of on-street parking in Station Road adjacent to the Gatekeeper Meadow development.

It was agreed that the tone and content of Mr Smith's correspondence with Paul Chappell "development manager highways HCC) is appropriate and now is the time to stop going around in circles and get the Station Road issues resolved without any further delay. To this end, it was agreed that a copy of this minute be sent to Paul Chappell, Ken Crofton (County Councillor), Rik Sharma (District Councillor). **Action: J Allsop**

This item to remain on agenda.

Agenda: 05/2014

b) Draft District Plan and public meetings

On Friday 11th April, the Parish Council held a public meeting to discuss with parishioners the effect of the draft District Plan and proposals on how we should respond to the plan.

The meeting was well attended and all present were in support of opposing the plans for 85 (at least) additional dwellings and the removal of two pieces of land from the Green Belt.

Most of the items raised by parishioners had already been addressed by the Parish Council although there was considerable concern about the School.

It was generally agreed that the main area of focus should be:

a) Loss of Green Belt.....This is to be addressed by resident planning experts. Mr. Harris noted that in an article he had read as a result of the weight of objection received that the inspector had come to the conclusion that it was inappropriate to develop the Green Belt.

b) Deliverability of the sites identified also to de addressed by resident.

Mr. Filer brought up the question of brown field sites. It was Mr. Smith's opinion that some reference to them should form part of the final response as we would be most unlikely to stop development of them and were actively seeking some sort of development for the Mill Lane site.

Parish Councillors agreed to hold an extraordinary Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 13th April at 1830 in the Community Hall to put together their response to the Draft District Plan.

Mr. Stock agreed to make changes to the petition notice entitled 'Our objections to the District Plan as it affects Watton-at-Stone'. This document will then to be e-mailed to all parishioners who left their contact details during the public meeting held on Friday 11th April with a view to them collecting signatures.

Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop

Mr. Smith read out a letter he proposed be sent to a select 30 to 35 District Councillors plus our MP Oliver Heald. Parish Councillors agreed that Mr. Smith should write accordingly. **Action: M. Smith/J. Allsop**

c) Sportsfield play area - confirmation and ordering

Mr. Smith said that East Herts Council have confirmed that £28,000 of the S106 funding will be available towards the new sportsfield play equipment. This funding will be payable on submission of invoice.

The following play equipment has now been ordered from Kompan.

- Under 5 year olds - Palace Fortress (originally Tree Castle), Crazy Daisy, Sunflower Hammock and Toddler Spica.
- Juniors - climbing frame
- 5 piece trim trail (exact location of the individual items yet to be agreed).

An additional £30,000 of the S106 has been earmarked for improvements to the River Beane.

d) Amendment to planning protocol and approval of draft letter re planning applications

Refer to item 7 Planning.

e) East Herts Council – improvements to Great Innings Play area

Mr. Smith said that he had e-mailed Ian Sharratt regarding East Herts Council disproportionate use of the S106 funding available for the village. East Herts Council have asked for the Parish Councils comments and support of their project.

After discussion, it was agreed that Mr. Smith should draft a letter and e-mail it to all Parish Councillors for approval, expressing disappointment at the way East Herts Council have used the S106 but also stating that the scheme they have chosen looks excellent. Following approval, Ian Sharratt to be e-mailed accordingly.

Action: M. Smith

f) Report on HCC - Town and Parish Conference held on 7th April 2014

Mr. Smith said that he and the Clerk attended the HCC conference on 7th April.

The conference was split into two parts, during which delegates were divided into table groups of approximately 8 people to discuss the issues as part of a workshop session.

The first part of the conference was to discuss ways of reducing the HCC's budget by Town and Parish Councils taking over additional responsibilities from them, such as grass cutting, cleaning signs, general maintenance, for which no additional funding would be available. The other half was to discuss promoting healthy lifestyles, including healthy eating and self-powered transport (walking and cycling).

9 Sub-Committees

a) Budget & Finance

Mr. Filer reported on the following items.

- Monthly accounts**

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council			
Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty cash - Payments	
None		None	
Cheques issued			
St Albans Diocesan Board	Sportsfield extension rent		90.00
Adam Welch	Leaf clearance £150, War Memorial garden £40		190.00
Wages and salaries	Leaf clear clearance and tennis		1202.78
Community Hall	1/2 of annual grant		2,610.00
Post Office Limited	Tax & NI		242.75
Phone calls	to 03.03.14		23.99
J. Allsop	Screwfix – 4 cam-locks for notice boards, screws for boot brushes		40.63
1 st Call Signs	Sign for MPPA		21.60
ABM Labels & Print	Velcro adhesive notice board backing		<u>52.20</u>
			<u>4,473.95</u>
Cheques received			
Malcom Oakman	Allotment rent		63.25
Anne-Marie Stephens	Allotment rent		<u>63.25</u>
			<u>126.50</u>
Watton-at-Stone Community Hall			
Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
Floodlighting donations to 11.04.14	160.00	None	
Vince Geoff – various facilities	32.00		
Carla Beach – Pavilion and meeting room	145.00		
Paul Reid – Meeting Room	9.00		
Vicki Roos – Meeting room	84.00		
Rosemary brown – Pavilion	31.50		
PCSO Sally Brooks – meeting room	5.00		
Tina Hilliard – Main Hall & Pavilion	72.00		
Yvonne Cooper – Main Hall & Pavilion	<u>48.00</u>		
	<u>586.50</u>		
Cheques issued			
Wages	To April 2014		798.13
Power P & F Ltd	Deposit for roller - £800 received from Cricket Club in March		800.00
Cricket Club	East Herts Council Grant for roller		3,500.00
HMRC	Vat return 10.2013		10.96
British Gas	gas - total bill £1230		387.10
Broxap	2 sets of boot brushes		184.80
Newitts	Tennis post winder mechanism		108.90
			<u>5,789.89</u>
Cheques received			
East Herts Council	Grant for roller to be reimbursed to cricket club		3500.00
Sports and Social Club	Donation towards cutting keys		57.82
Parish Council	½ year grant		2610.00
Watton-at-Stone School	Pavilion hire		<u>14.00</u>
			<u>6181.82</u>

Parish Councillors approved the above payments.

• **Parish Council and Community Hall 12-monthly statement of accounts for the year ended 2013/14**

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 31st March 2014.

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**

Income minus expenditure for the year is £9,578.99.

- Income**
- the Parish Council received £4,228.06 in VAT refunds for the years 2011/12 and 2012/13.
 - Allotment rent includes £200 of deposits for new tenants.
 - Grants and donations of £6004.94 were received towards new play equipment of which £4,111 of these funds was spent on the supply and installation of the Supernova play equipment.
 - £800 in donation received towards a line marker and the removal of a tree on Parish Council land at Rivershill
 - An additional £3,225 in New Homes bonus was received in 2013/14. A total of £4,925 in New Homes bonus is now being held by the Parish Council.

- Expenditure**
- Allotment Glebe rent, strimming. Maintenance and insurance over spend by 50%
 - Supernova purchase of £4,111 plus VAT was paid for by grants and donations.
 - No invoices have been received for street lighting maintenance and energy costs. The Clerk to contact HCC requesting they invoice us. **Action: J. Allsop**
 - New office equipment was purchased – laptop, printer and printer cartridges

• **Community Hall**

There is an over-spend of £5,310.08 on income minus expenditure

- Expenditure**
- Gas and electricity combined were under budget. Probably due to the mild winter.
 - Maintenance works include:
 - £815 for repairs to damaged brick wall and installation of a steel hoop
 - £434 to purchase and install a new lighting column
 - £2,678 for alteration works to the storerooms including electrician costs for altering lighting in storerooms and installing a new time clock and 2 new fans
 - £3600 for MPPA pressure washing and surface bonding – most of this work was funded from reserves
 - £551 for repair to two floodlights

- Income**
- Hall hire was well above budget.
 - Pavilion = £163.8% of budget and the Main Hall = £116.7%.

The Community Hall hirings will suffer in 2014/15 when Beane Valley stop hiring facilities in July this year.

Although they have dropped by over £5,000, Community Hall reserves are in excess of £17,000.

• **Summary of 12-monthly statement of accounts for the year ended 2013/14**

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 2013/14, which will be presented at the Annual Parish meeting on 20th May. **Action: J. Allsop**

• **CPRE – Membership renewal**

The annual CPRE subscription for 2014/15 is £30 (this is £1 more than in 2013/14).

It was agreed to renew this membership. **Action: J. Allsop**

• **CDA for Herts – Membership renewal**

The annual CDA for Herts subscription for 2014/15 is £30 (this is the same as in 2013/14).

It was agreed to renew this membership. **Action: J. Allsop**

• **CVS for Broxbourne and East Herts**

Last year, 2013/14 the Parish Council had free membership to CVS for Broxbourne and East Herts.

To continue this membership, which gives the Parish Council and Community Hall Trustees information relating to volunteer work, child protection and health and safety guide lines, membership for one year costs £20 and for a two year membership £30.

Parish Councillors agreed to take out the two-year membership. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Asset registers**
All Parish Councillors were issued with the Asset registers for the Parish Council and Community Hall. The Clerk said that the Asset register for the Parish Council is based on insurance valuations. Whereas the Community Hall register has estimated values as the insurance schedule does not specify the items individually. It was agreed to change the column heading 'Insurance Valuations' on the Community Hall Asset register to 'Current Estimated Asset Value'. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **BDO - Audit Briefing**
BDO LLP wrote on 19th March informing us of the details for the annual audit for the year ending 31st March 2014. The public inspection period starts on 28th April and ends on 27th May (a notice advertising the inspection period is currently displayed on the Parish Council notice board), the completed Annual Return and all relevant documentation needs to be sent to BDO LLP by 28th May 2014. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Internal Audit of Parish Council accounts for the year 2013/14**
The Clerk took the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31st March 2014 to Jim Morrissey for the internal audit today, Tuesday 15th April.
- **External audit of Community Hall accounts for the year 2013/14**
The Community Hall accounts, for the year ending 31st March 2014, need to be given to McCash and Hay for auditing. She agreed to do so as soon as possible. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Purchase request for laminating machine and shredding machine**
The Clerk has requested the purchase of a shredding machine and a Laminator.
Mr. Filer said that the Clerk found a shredding machine on Amazon at a discounted price of £39.99 (including VAT and delivery). He and Mrs. McCash have authorised the purchase.
Parish Councillors agreed that a laminator be purchased for approximately £40. **Action: J. Allsop**

Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **MPPA – notices**
The sign worded "In poor weather conditions, players use the courts at their own risk." has now been collected from 1st Call signs and the Clerk has given it to Mr. Knight so he can erect it on the MPPA fencing.
The Trustees have agreed that another sign is ordered for the MPPA from 1st Call signs stating:

‘PLEASE NOTE

To protect this specialist surface,
only SOFT ball games allowed in this facility
Strictly NO bicycles, skateboarding or roller-skates’.

The Clerk to act accordingly

Action: J. Allsop

- **Sportsfield and goal mouth maintenance**
Mr. Smith estimated that the maximum of £500 would be required for sportsfield pitch maintenance this year.

Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Harris reported on the following items.

- **Report on meeting held on 8th April 2014**
The draft minutes for the Community Hall Board of Trustees meeting held on 8th April had been issued to all Parish Councillors.
- **Child protection**
The Clerk has agreed to be the Child-Protection Officer for the Parish Council and Community Hall. Once she has completed some on-line child-protection training and sort CRB (criminal record) checks, now known as DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service), the Parish Council can review the draft Child-Protection Policy produced by Mr Stock.

Mr. Harris proposed that the Clerk undertakes the on-line training course, 'An introduction to Safeguarding Children', and completes it within the next two to three months. The course is provided by Me Learning at a cost of £30. This was agreed. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Quotations for painting the top windows and external-toilet doors and storeroom doors**

Mr. Meischke has obtained two quotations based on the same specifications.

- Divine Decoration - £1,500
- Peter Phillips - £1,700.

It was agreed to accept Devine Decoration's quotation.

Action: J. Meischke

- **Pavilion windows**

Mr. Meischke reported that one of window frames facing the sportsfield dropped out because it was rotten. The large set of windows facing the sportsfield are all in need of replacing.

Mr. Meischke agreed to obtain a quotation from Stevenage glass to replace these with aluminium-framed windows and also to ask Trevor Blacktin for his view on a longer-term solution, e.g., which may include doing away with the top section of windows. It was felt that plastic frames would not be a suitable option because these windows are south facing and the plastic may be subject to distortion. **Action: J. Meischke**

- **Renaming of the Community Hall**

Parish Councillors endorsed the Trustees recommendation that the Watton-at-Stone Community Hall be re-named 'The Nigel Poulton Community Hall (the name of the charitable status will remain unchanged). Mr. Smith said that Ann Poulton (Nigel's widow) was happy with this proposal.

Environment Sub-Committee

In the absence of Mrs. Dinnin, Mr. Smith read from her report on the following items.

- **River Beane Restoration Association**

Mrs. Dinnin's report on this item read as follows.

'Met Bob Thornton who said he may need to ask the Parish Council for £20 towards weed killer for the Lammas stretch of weed killing. He was under the impression this would be free, so he is asking each Parish Council and land owner along the river for a contribution.'

Mr. Knight said he would speak to Bob Thornton asking him to write to the Parish Council requesting funding. **Action: I. Knight**

- **Abstraction at Whitehall pump station**

Mr. Knight said that the RBRA had e-mailed all Parish Councillors with the news that the Affinity Water Plan to dramatically reduce abstraction levels at the Whitehall pumping station has been agreed by OFWAT.

- **Tree work on the Lammas**

Mrs. Dinnin's report on this item reads as follows.

'No response from Charlie Bell or PP3'

- **Allotments**

Mrs. Dinnin's report on this item reads as follows.

'All re-let, new tenants doing very well, some of the plots are not being worked on, will monitor over the next few weeks.'

- **Ornate village sign**

Mrs. Dinnin's report on this item reads as follows.

'Given instructions to Bob Adams and he says he will give an estimate, but weather still too unsettled to do the work.'

Bob Adam's quotation of £144.89 to sand and re-varnish the Ornate village sign has now been received.

Parish Councillors agreed to accept the quotation. Mrs. Dinnin to instruct Bob Adams to do the work. **Action: C. Dinnin**

- **Parish Council land at Rivershill**

Mr. Smith said that the Parish Council need to make a decision on the future of this land.

Mr. Harris said that any discussions on this subject should be taken under 'exclusion of press and public'.

The member of public, Mr. Stephen Carpanini, was asked to leave the meeting.

After a short discussion, Parish Councillors agreed to defer this item to the June Parish Council meeting where it will be taken under 'exclusion of public and press'.

Mr. Stephen Carpanini returned to the meeting.

- **Renewal of Ferreting licenses**

The ferreting licenses are up for renewal on 30th April. Parish Councillors agreed that the following ferreting licences be renewed. .

- Renew the ferreting licenses for Mr. R. Adams of 4 Glebe Close to ferret Watton Green, the Allotments, the Lammas and the paddock at the far end of the Lammas. **Action: M. Smith/J. Allsop**

- Renew the ferreting licenses to Mr. Peter Phillips (of Lammas Road), to ferret the Allotments and the Lammas. **Action: M. Smith/J. Allsop**

- **Renewal of license across Cottage site**

The licence for Temporary Access across the Land known as the "Old Cottage Site", at Watton Green, issued to Mr. Denis E. Filer (of Brambles, Watton Green) is up for renewal on 30th April. Parish Councillors agreed that this license should be renewed.

Action: M. Smith/J. Allsop

Condition of Benches in the village

Mr. Smith said he would liaise with Mrs Dinnin re the condition of the benches in the village.

Action: M. Smith/C. Dinnin

Mrs. McCash said that under the Payback System, the Parish Council could apply to have offenders carry-out tasks such as repainting benches in the village.

Mr. Meischke said that following the experience the Parish Council had with volunteer workers painting the benches a couple of years ago, he was not very keen on the idea of any volunteers or offenders doing the work. This was agreed by Parish Councillors.

- **War Memorial garden**

Mr. Smith said that the shrub in the War Memorial garden that appeared to be dead is alive.

Mr. Stock said that there are quite a lot of weeds among the stones around the outer edge of the War Memorial and throughout the garden itself. Mrs. McCash asked if a membrane to prevent weeds had been fitted under the stones. Mr. Stock said that there was no membrane and it would be a considerable amount of work to fit one and may not be a solution. The weeds need treating and, as previously agreed, additional stones laid. Mr. Stock to discuss this with Mrs. Dinnin so as to progress this matter forward.

Action: D. Stock

b) Routine Reports

i) Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests

Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke did the emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm.

ii) Monthly village-report

Mr. Smith completed the report on 14th April 2014.

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

- **Salt bins** - Mr. Smith said that he did not look at the salt bins. Mr. Stock said that he understood that we had previously agreed to check the bins on a monthly basis, regardless of the season, to ensure that any damage/problems could be identified as early as possible.

- **MPPA fence** – The boundary fence needs tightening.

Action: M. Smith/I. Knight

iii) Weekly sportsfield

Nothing to report.

v) Website

The Clerk to upload the updated version of the planning protocol.

Action: J. Allsop

vi) Website Diary

None.

vii) Highway and Lighting faults

None

10 Correspondence received

a) The Rural Services Network - Invite to join a Rural Sounding Board

David Inman (Rural Services Network) e-mailed on 7th April stating that they are currently developing a Rural Sounding Board of Parish Council representatives and invite the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council to join.

This Sounding Board will gather views and opinions of rural Parish Councils across England and will use the results and analysis to help inform wider debates about rural issues, and where appropriate, work to influence decision makers. The more Parish Councils that join the Sounding Board, the stronger their voice will be and they aim to have as many rural Parish Councils involved as possible.

Parish Councillors agreed that Watton-at-Stone should join the sounding board and nominated Mr. Smith to be their representative.

Action: M. Smith

b) East Herts Council Capital Grant programme

Mr. Smith said that although applicants who do not have access to S106 funding will be prioritised, he said we should still apply for funding where appropriate. This was agreed.

- **A 602 improvements**

The following e-mail was received on 12th March from Alissa Ede (Programme Manager, Major Projects Group, HCC)

'We are pleased to report that the A602 Improvements (Stevenage to/from Ware) scheme is progressing, as we are preparing to submit a business case to the Hertfordshire Local Transport Body for funding in April. The project is also part of the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's bid to the Single Local

Growth Fund, to be submitted at the end of March. For an overview of the scheme and a factsheet with further information about the project, please refer to the website:

<http://www.hertsdirect.org/a602>

There is a link on the left side of the page to a page with maps showing the outline design for the various junctions on the route and a description of the current proposals at each of the junctions.

In order to be able to deliver the project by 2019, we will require some environmental and technical surveys in the coming months. We will advise you when we will be sending letters to affected landowners.

If you have any further questions or comments, we will be setting up an e-mail address specific to the project in the next few days (it is not yet working currently). The e-mail address will be a602improvements@hertfordshire.gov.uk and it will be provided on the website once it is working.

Please could district officers circulate this information to the relevant District Councillors.'

After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed to respond to the HCC by suggesting that a slip road be included at the A119/A602 roundabout to allow traffic coming from Hertford to turn left into Watton-at-Stone.

Mr. Meischke to draft the response and e-mail it to all Parish Councillors for their comments/approval.

Action: J. Meischke

11 Village organisations

- **Watton-at-Stone War Memorial Hall Management Committee:** Nothing to report.

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

- **Watton Youth Drop Inn**

Mr. Meischke said that the Watton Youth Drop Inn have finally managed to get access to all their bank accounts and have now deposited all the funds in one account. They currently have approximately £2,500 and intend to get some specialised trainers in to run sporting activities

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

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

- **Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Watch**

Mrs. McCash said that the 'Owl' messaging service is being upgraded so information should be sent out quicker.

- **Watton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association:** Nothing to report.

- **Watton-at-Stone Pre-School Playgroup**

The Clerk said that Mrs. Dinnin's report highlighted the following items from the last Pre-School Playgroup minutes:

- A full time Chairperson is being sort
- The new build is progressing well
- Child attendance is good
- Fundraising events planned.

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

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

- **Broken windows**

Mr. Meischke said that two of the meeting room windowpanes have been broken.

Stevenage Glass have quoted £400 to replace these two windowpanes, plus two other broken panes in the main door.

The Trustees agreed to recommend to the Parish Council that these windows be replaced

Parish Council agreed to the Trustees recommendation.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

12 Items for Parish News

The following items were identified for inclusion in the May 2014 issue of the Parish News.

- The renaming of the Watton-at-Stone Community Hall to The Nigel Poulton Community Hall.
- The Parish Council extraordinary meeting on 13th May at 1830 to generate its final response to the East Herts District Plan

Action: I. Knight

- **The meeting closed at 2155.**

- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 20th May 2014.**