

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 17th June from 1922

Present: Mr. Michael Smith (Chairman) Mrs. Christine Dinnin
 Mr. Denis Filer Mr. Iain Harris (until 1931)
 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: Mr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman) and Chief Inspector Gerry McDonald.

2 Public Participation

None.

3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

None.

4 Declaration of Interests

Mr. Smith declared a personal interest in item 6 a i, Planning application – 43 Rivershill (in so much as his daughter is the applicant).

At Mr. Harris' request, items under 8 a, Community Hall Trustees and item 6 planning, are being brought forward for discussion.

8 a, Community Hall Trustees

- **External decoration work at the Community Hall**
 Devine Decoration Service has completed the external decoration work at the Community Hall. This included the application of two coats of Sadolin wood-stain to the high-level windows, fascia and soffit boards on both sides of the building and to the windows and doors on the lower car-park side of the building.
- **Professional cleaning**
 Mr. Harris said that Mr. Meischke had informed both of our cleaners that as from September there will be changes to the cleaning arrangements for the Community Hall.
- **Window cleaning**
 Until the cleaning arrangements at the Community Hall change, the Clerk to ask the current window cleaner to clean the windows. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Disabled car park sign**
 Mark Blacktin has not painted the disabled car-park sign.
- **Repair of four broken window panes**
 These have been replaced by Stevenage Glass.
- **Replacement Pavilion window frames**
 Mr. Meischke is in the process of obtaining quotations for replacing the large wall of windows in the Pavilion. It is planned that the top bank of windows be replaced with metal and with only the lower sections remaining as windows.
- **Stone plaques for The Nigel Poulton Community Hall**
 Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors (with the exception of Mr. Meischke, who was absent) viewed the two locations for the plaques. During discussions, it was agreed that two signs should comprise 13mm slate with silver lettering. The signs to be 450mm x 400mm for the main-entrance side of the building and 900mm x 200mm for the car-park side.
 Mr. Harris said that the signs will cost approximately £300 each.
 Mr. Smith to ask Mr. Meischke to order both signs. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Use of The Nigel Poulton Community Hall for the Community Service on 6th July and Community Picnic on 31st July**
 Parish Councillors agreed to the free use of the Community Hall for both of these events. The Clerk to write accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**

6 Planning

a) Applications

i) 43 Rivershill (3/14/0948/FP)

One and a half storey rear extension

Mr. Smith left the meeting while this item was discussed.

Mr. Knight said he visited the neighbours and they had had no objections to the application.

In accordance with the Parish Council's Planning Protocol, Mr. Harris liaised with Mr. Stock and Mr. Knight and they agreed that the Clerk be instructed to send a 'No comment' response to the planning department at East Herts Council.

Mr. Smith returned to the meeting.

Mr. Knight said that had made more than one attempt to visit the neighbours and didn't know how to get a copy of our standard letter for such situations. Mr. Stock suggested that although copies (electronic or hardcopy) can be requested from the Clerk, it may be useful and more efficient for each Parish Councillor to be in possession of an electronic copy of our standard letter. This was agreed and the Clerk to e-mail a copy of the letter to all Parish Councillors accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

ii) Watton Cottage, Perrywood Lane (3/14/0858/FP)

Installation of a complete insulation and render system to the external face of the house

Mr. Harris said that this application will be dealt with under the normal protocol.

b) Decisions

None

Mr. Harris left the meeting.

5 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 13th May 2014**
Parish Councillors approved the minutes.
- **Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on Tuesday 20th May 2014**
Parish Councillors approved the minutes.
- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 20th May 2014**
Parish Councillors approved the minutes.

b) Review of actions

1. **Renew ferreting licenses:** outstanding. **Action: M. Smith/J. Allsop**
2. **Send notice of Registrable Interest to all Parish Councillors:** completed.
3. **Update notice of Registrable Interests if required:** completed.
4. **Complete online child protection training:** outstanding. **Action: J. Allsop**
5. **Arrange to fit new Perspex in external notice board:** outstanding.
A new sheet of Perspex will be fitted in the notice board when a new location for the board has been agreed. This item to be removed from the agenda.
6. **Speak to Community Hall cleaners**
Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall Trustees – Professional cleaning.
7. **Ask Mark Blacktin to use line-marking paint to make the disabled sign in the car park**
Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall Trustees – Disabled Car Park sign.
8. **Obtain prices for Stone plaques for The Nigel Poulton Community Hall**
Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall Trustees – 'Stone plaques for The Nigel Poulton Community Hall'.
9. **Inspect the condition of the benches in the village**
Refer to 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Benches.
10. **Progress work at the War Memorial garden to completion**
Refer to 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee.
11. **Contact the Abel Smith estate re fallen tree on Parish Council land at Rivershill:** outstanding
Action: M. Smith

c) Action points resolved

1. Give the Clerk request for funding from Bob Thornton
2. Write to Ken Crofton requesting meeting between Highways and the Parish Council
3. Give East Herts Council the Parish Council's response to the draft district plan
4. Send Annual return and paperwork to BDO LLP
5. Send McCash and Hay copy of signed accounts requesting they sign bound copy
6. Renew Parish Council insurance with AON
7. Accept Adam Welch's quotation for tree work on the Lammas
8. Chase confirmation of P3 grant application
9. Accept in writing Bob Adam's quotation to varnish the ornate village sign
10. Issue ferreting licences to Bob. Adams, Peter Phillip and Roger Bridges
11. Accept Adam Welch's quotation for work at the War Memorial
12. Upload to the Watton-at-Stone website the Parish Council's response to the Draft District Plan
13. Forward Ian Sharratt's e-mail re Great Innings Play area to all Parish Councillors
14. E-mail Sergeant Wallace
15. Give Mr. Knight the Parish reports, account and Parish Councillors details, for inclusion in the Parish News
16. Include Parish reports, accounts and Parish Councillor details in the June issue of the Parish New
17. Write Parish News insert

6 Planning

This item was discussed directly after item 4 - Declarations of interest.

7 Specific items

a) Traffic along Station Road and the High Street

The Parish Council has formally written to Ken Crofton requesting meeting between Highways and the Parish Council. This letter was copied to Oliver Heald (MP), Rik Sharma (District Councillor), Paul Chappell (Highways) and Raj Goutam (Highways).

Mr. Smith said that Mr. Stock should be one of the Parish Councillors to attend this meeting. This was agreed.

b) Signing of the new sportsfield extension lease

The new sportsfield lease has been signed by both Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke and returned to Debenhams Ottoway.

• Community service – Sunday 6th July

Mr. Smith said that the Clerk contacted Watton-at-Stone School requesting the name of the year six pupil that will be awarded the Parish Council's 'Good Citizen Award'. She was informed that the Head Teacher would like the trophy to go to all year six pupils.

After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed that the nature of the award does not allow it to be awarded to more than one person. If the school is unable to agree on a single recipient, the trophy will not be awarded this year; however, it will be offered to the School again next year.

Mr. Smith to write to the Head Teacher at Watton-at-Stone accordingly.

Action: M. Smith

8 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		
Ted Brown	32 hours litterpicking	
AON Ltd	insurance premium	754.03
Wages and salaries	May and June	1953.2
Frank Cooper and SON	April - 3 x grass cutting	201.60
Frank Cooper and SON	May - 4 x grass cutting	268.80
Blue Bury Contractors		516.00
HCC	500 white peel and seal envelopes	<u>13.14</u>
		<u>3706.83</u>
Cheques received		
HMRC	VAT rebate for 2013/14	2019.84
		<u>2019.84</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
Carla Beach – Pavilion and meeting room	131.00	None	
Vicki Roos – Meeting room	75.00		
Vince Geoff – Meeting room	5.00		
Sharon Lee – Main Hall and Pavilion	60.00		
Floodlighting to 20/05/14	<u>60.00</u>		
	<u>331.00</u>		
Cheques issued			
Stevenage Glass	replace four window panes		480.00
Wages	June		360.60
McCash and Hay	Annual audit fee		129.60
UK City Roofing Contractors	work to Community Hall roof		288.00
Georgie Pay	refund on cancellation of Main Hall booking		<u>191.10</u>
			<u>1449.30</u>
Cheques received			
David Boddy	Main Hall and Pavilion hire		367.20
			<u>367.20</u>

Parish Councillors approved the above payments.

- **New homes bonus**

Mr. Filer reported that the East Herts Council wrote on 23rd May with the projected New Homes Bonus awards for the next six years. Next year more funds should come available when the remaining properties built at the Gatekeeper Meadow development are occupied and start paying their rates.

It was agreed that a small sub-committee should be formed to discuss how the funds should be spent. All organisations in the village would be able to apply for funding. Mr. Filer agreed to head up the sub-committee with Mr. Stock, Mr. Knight and Ms. Waltham as members. As with all sub-committees the Chairman and Vice-Chairman are automatically members.

Ms. Waltham suggested that an article is placed in the Parish News to say funds are available and inviting organisations to apply in writing. It was agreed to do this after the New Homes Bonus sub-committee has met.

It was agreed that the Parish Council should not relax on other funding opportunities that come available. Mr. Knight said he would be continuing to pursue Herts Sports Partnership for grants toward the building of a new tennis court. They have funding opportunities coming available in November and a public consultation on the need for this additional facility must be carried out before the application is submitted.

Mr. Smith suggested that a business study be carried out on the Community Hall to discuss ways of improving revenue funding for the hall. He suggested that the Main Hall could have a mezzanine floor added and access could be via an external stairwell. This item to be discussed at the next meeting of the Community Hall Trustees.

Agenda: Trustees 07/14

Note:

East Herts Council wrote again on 19th June, an extract is as follows.

“Please accept my sincere apologies as I have recently found out that there was an error in the calculations of the amount of New Homes Bonus that would be awarded at Parish level for 2014/15. This resulted in the total amount across the 4 years being used to calculate this year’s annual element as opposed to the new sum of money for just 2014/15. I apologise for the incorrect information being sent to you and for any confusion that this causes.”

The figures detailed in East Herts Council letter of 23rd May were for £51,022 for 2014/15, paid annually for the next six years. This has been reduced to £20,971. There is an additional £3,327 for awards granted in 2011/12 and 2013/14 (there were no awards in 2012/13 as no new properties were built in that year).

- **Completion of the Annual Return of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31st March 2014**

Mr. Filer said that BDO LLP wrote on 12th June enclosing the signed annual return for the year ended 31st March 2014 and their report, part of which reads as follows.

- ‘Minor issues

The council have included grant monies received in box 2, rather than box 3, other receipts.

Recommendation: the council should ensure in future years that the above minor errors or omissions are not included in the Statement of Accounts.

The Clerk said that box 2 should be for the annual precept only. However, the grant from East Herts Council, which allowed the Parish Council to lower its precept requirements, was included in box 2 in error.

Mr. Filer said that the Parish Council are now required to display a notice of conclusion of audit on the Parish Council notice board for a period of two weeks.

Action: J. Allsop

Parish Councillors approved the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2014 and noted BDO LLP’s report.

Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Harris reported on all items concerning the Community Hall Trustees directly after item 4, Declaration of interests.

Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **Installation of new play equipment on the Sportsfield**

Mr. Smith said that the installation of the new play equipment has been disappointingly slow. To date, three different gangs of workers have been on site. They were unable to store equipment or materials on site at the sportsfield because they could not get their container lorry down School Lane to off load the storage container. Mr. Smith said that he agreed that they could take the storage container to his farm and he has been taking items to the sportsfield as and when required.

Mr. Meischke thanked Mr. Smith for the considerably about of time he has had to spend on site trying to resolve problems on a daily basis.

Mr. Smith said he hoped that the work would be completed within the next week.

- **Goal mouth maintenance**

Mr. Knight said that Blue Bury Contractors have completed the agreed slitting work to the sportsfield. The goalmouths have had top soil added levelled and seeded with a tough variety of grass seed.

Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **River Beane meeting with Charlie Bell and John Brydon**

Mrs. Dinnin said that she, Mr. Smith and Mr. Knight had met again with Charlie Bell and John Brydon.

The culvert under the Mill site is in danger of collapse and it is the owners’ responsibility to keep it in a good state of repair. It has therefore been agreed that it would be too dangerous to permanently divert the

flow of the river through them. New plans have been drawn up; however, Mr. Smith and Mrs. Dinnin did not like these for several reasons including the fact that they do not allow for fish to swim upstream.

The owners of the Mill accept that in its current condition, they will not be able to build residential dwellings on this site.

John Brydon is trying to find out from the planners if there could be some justification to have some dwellings on the site. It may be possible for the Parish Council to do a land swap, which would entail moving the entrance of the Lammas and giving this land over to the owners of the Mill for development. This in turn would allow the river to be diverted and a new site entrance to the Lammas created. A meeting with Mr. Abel Smith would need to be arranged to discuss the plans.

Mr. Smith said that it is in the Parish Council's interest to take a flexible approach.

The trial planting scheme to encourage property owners to plant something in place of the hog weed in their gardens, is now taking place on Abel Smith land because, the location agreed on the Lammas is not suitable.

- **Benches**

Mrs. Dinnin said that most of the benches in the village need cleaning and varnishing. It was agreed to ask Mark Blacktin to do the work required. **Action: C. Dinnin**

The bench outside the Grey House needs replacing. It was agreed to obtain costings for a replacement recycled plastic bench. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Hedges**

Mrs. Dinnin said that complaints had been received about some of the hedges overgrowing the High Street footpaths from the George and Dragon to School Lane and in the loop between the two entrances to School Lane. She contacted Lindsay at the Abel Smith estate and the hedges were cut back the next day.

- **Great innings hedge**

John Capon, who lives in Great Innings, took it upon himself to cut back the hedge at the entrance to the Great Innings estate (which is adjacent to Mr. Harris property). Parish Councillors agreed that although he has done a good job of cutting back the hedge, he had no business to do so. It was agreed on this occasion not to take the matter further.

The Clerk said that visibility exiting Beane Road is being obscured by hedging in the Walkern Road. She agreed to contact Highways who usually keep this hedge trimmed back. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Allotments**

Mrs. Dinnin said that the disused allotment area, which was cleared last year, is overgrown and needs cutting back and weed killing. Mr. Smith agreed to make a site visit with Mrs. Dinnin to see what should be done. **Action: C. Dinnin/M. Smith**

Mrs. Dinnin said that some letters need to go out to allotment holders who are not cultivating their plots. **Action: C. Dinnin**

- **P3 grant**

The P3 grant of £1,000 has been approved and payment is expected soon.

b) Routine Reports

i) Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests

Mr. Smith and Mr. Stock did the emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm prior to the meeting.

ii) Monthly village-report

Mrs. Stanley completed the report.

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

- **Mill Lane** – litterbin was full and overflowing and there was a lot of dog fouling in the area.
- **Sportsfield** – litter at the top of the sportsfield and the litterbin was full.
- **Allotments** – as reported under Environment Sub-Committee.
- **War memorial** – large leaved weeds. Mrs. Dinnin said that these had now been weed killed.
- **Salt bins** – not inspected.

The Clerk to report that the litterbins in Mill Lane, opposite the Doctor's surgery and on the Lammas all need emptying. **Action: J. Allsop**

- iii) **Weekly sportsfield**
Nothing to report.
- iv) **Website**
None.
- vi) **Highway and Lighting faults**
Mr. Filer said that he had reported to the Clerk a deep pothole near the railway line in Perrywood Lane
The Clerk to report on the Highways faults system, street roundabout sign number 105 at the Great Innings roundabout as corroded and full of holes. **Action: J. Allsop**

9 Correspondence received

- a) **HCC – A602 improvements**
This item was discussed with the item below.
- b) **Hertfordshire Local Transport Body – Business Case Consultations on the A120 and A602 Schemes**
Mr. Smith read out the proposed list of improvements to the A120 and A602. When the scheme has been approved, construction work is scheduled to take place in the year 2017/18.
- c) **Adam Welch re Draft District Plan petition**
Mr. Smith said that he had received an e-mail from Adam Welch concerning the numbers of signatures collected for the petition objecting to the draft District Plan. Adam Welch was under the impression that only 300 hundred signatures were collected for three thousand residents. Mr. Smith has replied informing him that in excess of 500 signatories were collected with individuals also writing to East Herts Council. There are approximately 2400 residents in Watton-at-Stone of which 550 are children.

10 Village organisations

- **Watton-at-Stone War Memorial Hall Management Committee**
Mr. Stock attended the recent meeting of the Memorial Hall Management Committee and everything continues to run smoothly.
- **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

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

- Play area improvements. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **The meeting closed at 2041.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 15th July 2014.**