

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 16th September 2014

Present: Mr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman) Mr. Denis Filer (until 2010)
Mr. Iain Harris Mr. Ian Knight
Mrs. Helen McCash (from 1945) Mrs. Margaret Stanley
Mr. David Stock Ms. Emma Waltham
The Clerk (Mrs. Jane Allsop)

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence: Mr. Michael Smith (Chairman) and Mrs. Christine Dinnin.

2 Public Participation

None.

3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

None.

4 Declaration of Interests

None.

5 Report from Sergeant Duncan Wallace

Mr. Meischke read Sergeant Duncan Wallace's report (dated 12th September) for crime related incidents that have occurred between 15th July and 12th September. The Clerk to e-mail all Parish Councillors a copy of this report.

Action: J. Allsop

6 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance.

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 15th July 2014**
Parish Councillors approved the minutes.

b) Review of actions

1. Chase non-returned ferreting licenses

The Clerk said that Peter Phillips and Bob Adams have returned their signed ferreting licences.

The Clerk to chase Roger Bridges for his license.

Action: J. Allsop

2. Speak to Mark Blacktin about renovating the village benches

Refer to item 9 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Benches.

3. Speak to Deborah Freeman about broken memorial seat on the sportsfield

Refer to item 9 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Benches.

4. Look at existing Pavilion windows and agree the exact requirements for their replacement

Refer to item 9 a, Community Hall Trustees.

5. Contact East Herts Council to find out if churches can benefit from the New Homes Bonus funding

The Clerk spoke to Adele Taylor (East Herts Council) to find out if the churches in Watton-at-Stone can apply for grants from the New Homes bonus funding. She was verbally informed that there are no restrictions and Adele Taylor confirmed this by e-mail on 11th August as follows.

‘Just to follow up on your query in regard to New Homes Bonus usage – from East Herts Council perspective, we are granting to you with no restrictions.

The only restrictions on the use of the money will be your own constitution and what that allows you to do. You will need to be satisfied that your own constitution allows you to grant to particular bodies.’

c) Action points resolved

1. Write to planning re 37 Station Road
2. Visit the residents affected by the planning application for 37 Station Road
3. Write to planning department re the Crowbury
4. **Write letter to Oliver Heald MP re traffic along Station Road**
Mr. Stock said that he had postponed this action point because at the last minute the Highways Department agreed to a site meeting with the Parish Council.
Refer to item 8 a, Specific items - Traffic along Station Road and the High Street.
5. Carry-out 3-month inspection of accounts
6. Chase Mark Blacktin re disabled car park sign
7. Give Mr. Meischke the names of window contractors
8. Inform Vicki Roos that she can have a set of Community Hall keys
9. Instruct Kompan to re-site the junior climbing frame
10. Identify the new touchline positions so that the football pitch can be marked out
11. Agree colour and order stones for the base of the War Memorial
12. Inspect overgrown hedges & instruct the Clerk to write to the property owners as required
13. Contact East Herts re emptying of litterbins in the village
14. Give the sportsfield extension lease to Mr. Meischke so he can put it in the safe
15. Contact the Clerk re attending the EHAPTC meeting on 10th September
16. Attend the East Herts Rural Parish Conference on 12th September
17. Contact Mr. Smith re attending the East Herts Rural Parish conference on 12th September
18. Write article for Parish News

7 Planning**a) Applications****i) 1a High Street (3/14/1151/FP)**

Levelling of rear garden with steps and 2 retaining walls

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

ii) Glebe House, Rectory Lane (3/14/1502/FP)

Erect detached dwelling and garage in the grounds of Glebe House

Mr. Harris showed Parish Councillors a picture of Glebe House, an attractive Queen Ann House, with an artist impression of the proposed new dwelling included.

Mr. Harris said that, in his opinion, the new dwelling is out of keeping with the adjacent property and an overdevelopment. Parish Councillors agreed with this and after discussions, it was agreed to write to East Herts Council as follows.

'The Parish Council strongly objects to the proposed new dwelling, by reason of its size, height and design, which would result in an unduly prominent and visually intrusive development in this conservation area. The new dwelling would be out of keeping with the established character of the surrounding area and detrimental to the appearance of the street scene.'

Action: J. Allsop

b) Decisions**i) 43 Rivershill (3/14/0948/FP)**

One and a half storey rear extension

- East Herts Council – permission granted

ii) 37 Station Road (3/14/1133/FP)

Erection of one dwelling

- East Herts Council – permission refused

The planning decision reason for refusal reads as follows.

'The proposed new dwelling, by reason of its size, height and design would result in an unduly prominent and visually intrusive development which would be out of keeping with the established character of the surrounding area and detrimental to the appearance of the street scene. Furthermore, the restricted plot size would result in inadequate private amenity space for the new dwelling to the detriment of the amenities of the future occupiers of the property. The proposal would therefore be contrary to policies HSG7 and ENV1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007 and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.'

iii) Heath Mount School (3/14/0721)

Erection of six replacement classrooms and performing arts space in The Dell for use in association with Heath Mount School

- East Herts Council – permission granted

iv) 101 High Street (3)14/1181/LB) – Listed Building consent

Regularisation of the formation of en-suite bathroom to master bedroom with external soil and vent pipe and ventilation grille to flank wall (driveway side) - East Herts Council – permission granted

Mr. Harris suggested that the planning decision notices for granting or refusal of application could be included on the planning-applicaion pages of the Watton-at-Stone website. This was agreed by Parish Councillors.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

c) Appeal decision

i) 99 High Street (3/13/1405/FP)

Boundary fence and planting

- Appeal dismissed

ii) 99 High Street (3/13/1406)

Boundary fence and planting - Listed building consent

- Appeal dismissed

At Mr. Filer’s request, items under 9 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee and the New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee were brought forward for discussion.

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 | | | |
| J. Allsop | Amazon - laminating machine | | 21.75 |
| Ted Brown | grass cutting | | 45.00 |
| Ted Brown | 32 hours litterpicking @ £8.10 per hour | | 259.20 |
| Robert Adams | prepare and varnish village sign | | 144.89 |
| Ted Brown | cut back sportsfield hedge along School Lane | | 20.00 |
| Frank Cooper and Son | football pitch marking | | 114.00 |
| Frank Cooper and Son | July - 3 x grass cutting | | 201.60 |
| Adam Welch | Lammas £950, weed kill Memorial £90, hedges & beds £75 | | 1,115.00 |
| Ted Brown | strimming and mowing | | 80.00 |
| Ted Brown | 31 hours litterpicking @ £8.10 per hour | | 251.10 |
| J. Allsop | August salary + allowance | | 847.03 |
| Ted Brown | | | 30.00 |
| Community Hall | funds for toddler play equipment | | 19,682.80 |
| Chas Lowe | stones for the War Memorial site | | 82.80 |
| Frank Cooper and Son | August - 4 x grass cutting | | 268.80 |
| J. Allsop | Amazon - paper shredder | | 39.99 |
| N J Whitehead | Sportsfield hedge cutting | | 456.00 |
| Ted Brown | 32 hours litterpicking @ £8.10 per hour | | 259.20 |
| J. Allsop | September salary + allowance | | 847.03 |
| | | | <u>24,766.1</u> |
| Cheques received | | | |
| None | | | |
| | | | |

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

| Petty Cash – Receipts | | Petty Cash -Payments | |
|---|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Carla Beach – Pavilion & meeting room | 275.50 | HCC – Cleaning materials | 62.04 |
| Lisa Simpson - Main Hall & Pavilion | 32.50 | HCC – Cleaning materials | 17.09 |
| Vicki Roos – Meeting room | 21.00 | HCC – Cleaning materials | <u>76.92</u> |
| Rebecca Brittain – Pavilion hire | 21.00 | | <u>156.05</u> |
| Stephen Peters - Main Hall and Pavilion | 52.00 | | |
| V. Geoff - Main Hall & meeting room | <u>77.00</u> | | |
| | <u>479.00</u> | | |
| Cheques issued | | | |
| Norris and Fisher | Additional insurance premium re new play equipment | | 11.93 |
| Rosemary Brown | 22 hours cleaning @ £7.85 per hour | | 172.20 |
| Brian Thompson | 24 hours cleaning @ £7.85 per hour | | 188.40 |
| Mark Blacktin | disabled car park sign | | 120.00 |
| John Phillips | | | 122.00 |
| Rosemary Brown | 23 hours cleaning @ £7.85 per hour | | 180.55 |
| J. Allsop | Rustic Stone - replacement Nigel Poulton slate sign | | 130.00 |
| Brian Thompson | 24 hours cleaning @ £7.85 per hour | | 188.40 |
| The Play Inspection Company | post installation inspection | | 354.00 |
| Mark Blacktin | install 'The Nigel Poulton Community Hall' slate stones | | 110.00 |
| East Herts Council | Annual playground inspection | | 55.86 |
| D P Electrics | to refit damaged ceiling light in Pavilion | | 72.00 |
| Rosemary Brown | 22 hours cleaning @ £7.85 per hour | | <u>172.20</u> |
| | | | <u>1,877.54</u> |
| Cheques received | | | |
| Watton School | Main Hall and Pavilion hire | | 90.00 |
| Watton Youth Drop Inn | Main Hall and Pavilion hire | | 324.00 |
| RBRA | Pavilion hire | | 14.00 |
| Mrs. Dixon | Main Hall and Pavilion hire | | 45.00 |
| Ian Knight | Key - donation | | 10.00 |
| Peter Khera | Main Hall and Pavilion hire | | 108.00 |
| David Boddy | Main Hall and Pavilion hire | | 214.20 |
| Parish Council | for toddler play equipment | | <u>19,692.80</u> |
| | | | <u>20,498.00</u> |

Parish Councillors approved the above payments.

• **S106 funding for the play area**

The Watton-at-Stone Community Hall has received £28,792.73 of funding from the East Council’s S106 funding pot. This money has paid for the junior slide, the trim-trail and the post installation inspection.

The toddler play area and the supernova were paid for from East Herts Council, BIFFA and HCC grants plus funding raised by the play fundraisers and just under £405 from the Parish Council’s grant of a £1000. There is £595 of funds remaining from the Parish Council grant and this could be put towards the seat and the bike rack that were part of the BIFFA grant application.

Kompan has invoiced the Community Hall for all the play equipment and the funds raised for the toddler play area have been transferred into the Community Hall account. The remaining £595 remains in the Parish Council bank account.

HM Revenue and Customs have done a site visit and approved the VAT return of £9,638.10 relating to the three Kompan invoices. The VAT inspector also took the opportunity to visit the new equipment at the play area.

- **Allotment rent and water charges**

The following is a minute extract from the December 2013 Parish Council meeting.

‘The allotment rent remains the same at £20 per full allotment and £10 for one-half of an allotment. Allotment water charges to be reviewed at the September Parish Council meeting, prior to the annual invoices going out on 1st October 2014.’

Mr. Filer said that Mrs. Dinnin has recommended that the allotment water charges remain the same at £6.50 for a full plot and £3.25 for a half plot. Parish Councillors endorsed Mrs. Dinnin’s recommendation.

The Clerk to invoice the allotment holders accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee

Report on meeting held on 9th September 2014

Mr. Filer said that the following Parish Councillors attended the second meeting of the New Homes Bonus Committee on 9th September.

Mr. Filer (Chairman)

Mr. Michael Smith

Mr. Ian Knight

Mr. David Stock

Ms. Emma Waltham

The Clerk (Mrs. Jane Allsop)

- **Funding**

Mr. Filer said that, to date, there have been no applications received in response to the notice placed in the Parish News for village organisations to apply for funding.

It was agreed to put up notices around the village advertising the funding available.

Mr. Stock agreed to design the notice for approval by members of the New Homes bonus sub-committee and this action has now been completed.

- **Bus shelters**

Funding for some or all of the bus shelters in the High Street may be available from the S106 Highways funding.

The Clerk has been in contact with Sharon Parnell, ITP Officer (Bus Stop Infrastructure) at Highways, who has provided some photographs of metal bus shelters they use as well as a link to the website for some wooden structures. It was agreed that the Parish Council find out exactly what the procedure is for applying for the installation of bus shelters for the village. **Action: M. Smith/J. Allsop**

The New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee recommendation is that the Parish Council notionally allocate £10,000 towards bus shelters from the New Homes Bonus.

Parish Councillors approved the notional allocation of £10,000 of New Homes Bonus funding toward bus shelters.

- **Double Glazed Windows for the War Memorial Hall**

Mr. Filer said that he had obtained two quotations for replacing five small windows at the War Memorial Hall.

Hertford Glass

£1,283

Elmes

£2,436

Mrs. McCash will be submitting an application to the Parish Council for New Homes Bonus funding on behalf of the War Memorial Hall committee.

- **Development of Nigel Poulton Community Hall**

Mr. Filer said that Mr. Smith had been in contact with Kath Sexton (CDA for Hertfordshire) who is able to provide consultancy work re recommendations to further develop The Nigel Poulton Community Hall. She estimates that this would take two days at a cost of approximately £600.

The New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee recommendation is that the Parish Council ask CDA for Hertfordshire to carry-out the consultancy work at The Nigel Poulton Community Hall and the cost is met from the New Homes Bonus funding.

Parish Councillors endorsed the New Homes Bonus Sub-Committees recommendation.

Mr. Smith to contact Kath Sexton accordingly.

Action: M. Smith

- **New Tennis Court**

Herts Sports Partnership have some grant funding available from Sport England in November. However, it is unlikely that we will be successful in obtaining a grant towards the building of the new tennis court because the criteria for funding requires the facility to be a dedicated Multi-purpose play area and not a tennis court.

Mr. Knight to obtain up-to-date quotations for the building of the new tennis court including floodlighting costs. **Action: I. Knight**

The Clerk said that BIFFA might have some funding available and Mr. Knight agreed to make contact with them. **Action: I. Knight**

Mrs. McCash arrived at the meeting.

8 Specific items

a) Traffic along Station Road and the High Street

Mr. Stock reported on the site meeting he and Ms. Waltham had on Tuesday 12th August with HCC representatives Dave Burt, Ian Batcock and Rosemary Chatindo and Ken Crofton, our County Councillor. He also reminded Parish Councillors that to save time he had e-mailed a copy of the HCC-produced minutes to them in advance of our meeting today.

The site meeting moved along Station Road so that we could illustrate the problems of concern at 4 main locations, namely the stretch of road between the railway station and the main entrance to the Gatekeeper Meadow development (i.e. Clappers Lane), the 'school crossing' point between the Hazeldell and Glebe Close junctions, the crossing point opposite Rectory Lane and the crossing point at the junction with the High Street.

Our points were strongly made and subsequently Mr. Stock and Ms. Waltham agreed it was a very positive meeting and were pleased to see that all present from HCC, and our County Councillor, could easily appreciate the reasons for our concerns about pedestrian-safety issues and traffic movements along Station Road.

Mr. Stock reminded HCC that these long-standing problems continue to get worse and we as a Parish Council remained increasingly concerned that nothing was being done by Highways to address them. However, it was pleasing to note that during the discussions about the currently un-controlled 'school crossing' point the suggestion to have a pedestrian crossing installed met with a positive response from HCC.

Mrs. Stanley said that HCC have a school travel plan coordinator who might be able to put forward ideas.

Mrs. Stanley to pass the contact details for the Travel Plan Coordinator to Ms. Waltham. **Action: M. Stanley**

At the conclusion of his report, Mr. Stock said that he and Ms. Waltham remained concerned about the timing and funding-capture for improvements to Station Road and therefore wanted to maintain a dialog with HCC to ensure that we have commitments that we can monitor and measure them against. This was agreed by all present and he undertook an action point to prepare a written response to the HCC-prepared minutes of the site meeting. **Action: D. Stock**

Note: For the sake of completeness, a copy of the HCC-produced minutes of the site meeting and the Parish Council response written by Mr. Stock are attached to these minutes. **See attached**

Mr. Stock went on to say that he felt our concerns about pedestrian safety and traffic movements in the High Street (which are de-coupled from the Station Road issues) should now be 'ramped-up' and treated with the same vigour as those in Station Road and it would be useful if one or two Parish Councillors could take a lead on this to move it forward. Mr. Meischke said that it may be useful to have an ad hoc meeting on this subject. **Agenda 10/14**

Mr. Filer left the meeting.

b) Meeting with HCC re A602 improvements

Mr. Meischke said that quite a few notices were put up around the village by HCC requesting that the landowners make contact with them. One of these notices appeared at the sportsfield. Contact was made with Chris Wilkinson (Senior Engineer, Major Projects at HCC), who sent out the notices and he and his colleague agreed to meet with Mr. Smith, Mr. Meischke and the Clerk at the Community Hall on 28th August.

Chris Wilkinson apologised for the upset the notices have caused villagers and agreed that the situation had not been handled well. He said that there are several other plots of land that need identifying and he would e-mail the details across to the Clerk so that Parish Council can identify them if possible.

He explained that when major road improvements are being planned the local landowners within 500 meters of the proposed works need to be contacted to obtain permission to gain access to their land if required. This is to ensure the protection of rare species such as Crested Newts. HCC contacted the land registry and the notices then appeared on all sites that had no registered owners. It would appear that although the Parish Council own the sportsfield, because the Diocesan Board deeded it to them, the land was never registered in their name.

Mr. Harris said that land acquired before a certain date did not need to be registered.

It has also become known that the Mike Freeman has his name on the land registry for the Parish Council land that the War Memorial stands on, because, at the time of registration, he was Chairman of the Parish Council.

Chris Wilkinson e-mailed on 4th September attaching four maps of land that required identifying. It was agreed that Mr. Smith, Mr. Meischke, Mr. Stock and Mr. Harris meet to discuss the plots of land so that a response can be made to Chris Wilkinson as soon as possible.

Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke/D. Stock/I. Harris

It was agreed that Mike Freeman's name is removed from the Land Registry for the War Memorial site and the Clerk's address be used instead. **Action: J. Allsop**

c) Nigel Poulton - plaques and bench

Mr. Meischke said that there was a problem with one of the two 'The Nigel Poulton Community Hall' slate plaques. The wording on the sign was incorrect and had to be re-ordered at an additional cost of £130. Although the e-mail instruction to Rustic Stone stated the correct wording, the attached drawings (which was original provided by Rustic Stone) showed one sign with the wording correct and the other with Memorial Hall on it. Rustic Stone agreed to produce the replacement signs at a greatly reduced rate.

As the signs were not ready for unveiling at the Community picnic on 31st July 2014, Parish Councillors discussed when they should be unveiled. One suggestion was to have a fund raising event in aid of NSPCC, which Nigel Poulton strongly supported, and unveil the signs at this event.

After discussion, it was agreed to put this item on the October agenda.

Agenda: 10/14

Parish Councillors discussed the purchase of a Nigel Poulton memorial seat and agreed that, because maintenance costs are so high, all new benches should be purchased in recycled plastic.

It was agreed that Parish Councillors look at the Glasdon website page on recycled material seating and a decision on the style and location of a memorial seat will be made at the October Parish Council meeting.

Agenda: 10/14

The Clerk to e-mail Parish Councillors the appropriate link to the Glasdon UK Limited website.

Action: J. Allsop

d) The 2015 election of District and Parish Councillors

Rik Sharma will not be standing at the 2015 elections. The Conservative Association approached the Parish News asking if they could place an advert in the next issue asking for candidates to come forward. Mr. Knight informed them that the Parish News is a non-political publication and therefore the Conservative Association could not advertise in it.

Mrs. McCash was also approached by the Conservative Association and told them that they could not advertise in the Parish News or on the Parish Council notice boards.

Mr. Meischke said that the Parish Council will also be up for re-election in 2015. The Clerk to e-mail all Parish Councillors the publication titled 'Agenda item: Parish Councillor Recruitment Project 2015.'

Action: J. Allsop

9 Sub-Committees

a) Budget & Finance

This item was discussed directly after item 9 c, Planning – Appeal Decisions.

Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Harris reported on the following items concerning the Community Hall Trustees.

Mr. Harris said that the Trustees had to cancel their July meeting and would re-schedule the meeting for some time in November.

- **Community Hall cleaning**

Mr. Meischke said that as from 6th October, Total Contract Cleaners start cleaning the Community Hall on Monday mornings. Although the services of one of our current self-employed cleaners will therefore no longer be required, it was agreed to retain Rosemary Brown to do the remaining weekly-cleaning duties. This new arrangement should result in an overall reduction in our cleaning-costs. Mr. Meischke to speak to both of our current self-employed cleaners accordingly

Action: J. Meischke

- **Disabled car park sign**

Mark Blacktin has made a good job of painting the sign on the tarmac.

- **Quotations for Replacing the Pavilion window frames**

Three quotations have been obtained. However, this item will remain on hold until after the CDA-for-Hertfordshire consultancy work re recommendations to further develop The Nigel Poulton Community has been completed.

- **Lock to the referee changing room that was used as a store cupboard by Beane Valley Children's**

It was agreed that the lock to the former storeroom at the Community Hall should be changed back to the original lock so that it is identical to the other referee's changing room.

The Clerk to instruct Michael Lewis (A P Access) accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Quotations for installation of new boiler system**

This item will remain on hold until after the CDA-for-Hertfordshire consultancy work re recommendations to further develop The Nigel Poulton Community, has been completed.

- **Boiler service**

The Clerk asked James Turner Limited to do the annual boiler service in October.

The Clerk to e-mail the date to Mr. Meischke.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Child protection and Annual Return**

Both these items to be placed on the next agenda of the Community Hall Trustees.

Agenda: Trustees

Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **New play equipment update**

The post installation inspection of the new play equipment carried out by the Play Inspection Company, identified various faults.

- Grass seeding work required around several pieces of equipment.
- Trip hazard between the safety surface and the grass.
- Missing or damaged bolt caps, end caps etc. on various pieces of equipment.
- Insufficient ground clearance under the Supernova. Ground clearance is 90mm (should be 117mm).
- Spring crazy daisy is loose on its foundations.
- Missing insert between the frame and the slide and missing end caps on the toddler multi play.
- Finger entrapment on the junior climbing frame, between the frame and the climbing panel and missing bolt cap and fixing post cap covers.

Ms. Waltham expressed concern about the safety of the supernova and the spring crazy daisy and asked if these pieces of equipment should be closed to the public. Mr. Meischke said that the faults have been identified as low risk items

It was agreed that the Play Inspection Company be asked if these two pieces of equipment should be closed to the public and Kompan to be asked to resolve the problems. **Action: J. Allsop**

Parish Councillors agreed that the Community Hall Trustees should go through the items highlighted in the post installation inspection to ensure that all the safety issues have been resolved. **Action: Trustees**

This item to be placed on the next agenda of the Community Hall Trustees. **Agenda: Trustees**

- **Annual inspection of play area**

East Herts Council e-mailed (on 21st August) the annual play area inspection, which was carried out on 14th July 2014. The Clerk forwarded the e-mail and report to the Trustees and Mr. Smith on 21st August.

This item to be placed on the next agenda of the Community Hall Trustees. **Agenda: Trustees**

- **Quotation for replacement fencing around the MPPA**

Mr. Knight said that the Clerk gave him the details of a fencing contractor who contacted her by e-mail. He arranged to meet them and they have subsequently provided a quotation of £20,000 to replace the MPPA chain-link fencing. The quotation is not precise enough, as it does not include replacing the wooden kicker boards. It was agreed to put this quotation on file as a guide to the cost of replacing the MPPA fencing.

Environment Sub-Committee

In the absence of Mrs. Dinnin, Mr. Meischke reported on the following items.

Mr. Meischke read from Mrs. Dinnin's report of the following items.

- **Lammas**

Adam Welch has started on the clearance work along the river bank, this was complicated by two trees falling across the river during recent heavy rain storms, incurring extra expense, so as the money had run out it was decided to stop work temporarily at the chestnut tree.

Bluebury Contractors will clear along the bank, as near to the river as possible, when they do their final grass cut. This additional work will cost approximately £200. When this work has been completed the Environment Agency and Charlie Bell to be asked to make a site visit to look at the work so far and help us make a plan to complete the clearance work using the S106 funding.

Whilst on the Lammas it was noted that three of the new elm trees have got lots of brown marks on their leaves. The Clerk to contact Malcolm Amey (East Herts Council) for his advice. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **War Memorial**

The stones for the War Memorial have been purchased and laid, however the additional planting remains outstanding. This item to remain on the agenda. **Agenda: Env-10/14**

- **Benches**

Mark Blacktin has been instructed to start work on the benches.

Mr. Meischke said that he had given Deborah Freeman the Glasdon UK catalogue showing the range of benches made out of recycled material so she can chose one to replace the broken memorial bench on the sportsfield in memory of her grandparents.

The Parish Council also need to choose a memorial bench or benches for Nigel Poulton

Agenda: Env-10/14

- **Hedges**

It appears that although Highways has received, via its website, reports of problems concerning overhanging trees and hedges along both sides of the footpath running from Old School Orchard to the rear of 78/80 High Street (property adjacent to the George and Dragon Public house), no action has been taken. There are branches covering the streetlight making the footpath very dark and dangerous at night.

Mrs. McCash said that an elderly person had fallen on this footpath and was receiving ongoing medical treatment due to the injuries she sustained.

Parish Councillors agreed that the Clerk should phone Hertfordshire County Council and ask them what action is planned and if necessary to temporarily close the section of footpath involved. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Allotments**

There are four vacant and overgrown allotment plots and possibly a further three will become vacant when the renewal invoices go out at the beginning of October. Currently there is one person on the allotment waiting list.

- **New oak tree**

Maurice Gordon has asked, on behalf of the Watton-at-Stone Ramblers Association, if they could purchase and plant a 12ft Oak tree in memory of one of their members. They also asked where the Parish Council would like the Oak tree planted.

After discussion, Parish Councillors suggested Watton Green as a possible site but agreed to defer the decision until Mrs. Dinnin and Mr. Smith could agree on the best location with them. **Agenda: Env-10/14**

- **Parish Council land at Rivershill**

This item to be placed on the October agenda.

Agenda: Env-10/14

New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee

This item was discussed following after Budget and Finance Sub-Committee directly after item 9 c, Planning – Appeal Decisions.

b) Routine Reports

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

Mr. Meischke said he would arrange for the emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm within the next few days after this meeting. **Action: J. Meischke**

- ii) **Monthly village-report**

Mr. Knight completed the report.

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

- **Sportsfield hedge cut** – Mr. Knight said that it was unfortunate that Nick Whitehead was not instructed to cut back the holly hedge whilst he was on site cutting the sportsfield hedge.

- **Sportsfield boundary post and rail fence** – two sections of the fence are broken.

Ask Mr. Smith to inspect the fence and arrange for its repair.

Action: I. Knight/M. Smith

- **Oak tree – The elder growing at the base of the large Oak tree needs cutting back.**

Ted Brown to be asked to cut the elder down.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Church walk – the street light is not working.**

The Clerk to report this faults to Highways.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Grass seeding** - some grass seeding work is required around the new play areas.

Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke to inspect

Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke

- **Allotment** – the top area of the allotments is in terrible condition.

This item to be placed on the October agenda under Environment Sub-Committee. **Agenda: Env-10/14**

- iii) **Weekly sportsfield**

Nothing to report.

- iv) **Website**

None.

- vi) **Highway and Lighting faults**

One of the two bollards on the footpath over the Walkern Road Bridge has been knocked down.

The Clerk to report to Highways faults.

Action: J. Allsop

10 Correspondence received

a) HCC – 2nd Hertfordshire Town and Parish Councils Conference on 16th October

Mr. Meischke said that Mr. Smith and the Clerk have agreed to attend the Town and Parish Councils' Conference on 16th October 2014 at Robertson House in Stevenage.

Any other Parish Councillors wishing to attend should notify the Clerk.

Hertfordshire County Council to be notified accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

b) HCC - Review of County Council funded bus service - Thursday 25 September 2014

The Parish Council has been invited to attend a meeting, on 25th September, on the review of the HCC bus service in Hertfordshire. The Parish Council will not be representative at this meeting.

c) Mrs. Vivien Kemp – bonfires on the allotments

Mr. Meischke read out an undated letter from Mrs. Vivien Kemp (5 Glebe Court) concerning the nuisance caused by allotment holders having bonfires.

After discussion it was agreed to enclose a letter with the allotment rent renewals informing them of the complaint received and reminding them to pay attention to clause 7 of their tenancy agreement. Namely:

“To pay due attention to the burning of non-compostable plant material and at all times avoid annoyance to neighbouring premises and sports areas from bonfire smoke. Compostable plant material must be disposed of either by composting on the Tenant's allotment or disposed of through approved re-cycling schemes.”

The Clerk to liaise with Mrs. Dinnin re the content of the letter to allotment holders.

Action: J. Allsop

d) Terry Sharpe – re proposals for setting up a model aircraft club in Watton-at-Stone

Mr. Meischke read an e-mail from Terry Sharpe who would like to set up a model aircraft club in Watton-at-Stone and is asking the Parish Council if they can identify suitable land.

The land needs to be ideally away from houses as the models are quite large and fast, with aircraft of around six feet wing span flying at speeds of around 50 to 150mph.

Parish Councillors discussed the proposal but were unable to identify any land in their ownership that would be suitable. It was agreed to reply to Terry Sharpe as follows.

“The Parish Council discussed your request for a site on land within its ownership which may be suitable for you to start a model aircraft club in Watton-at-Stone. Unfortunately, we are unable to identify anywhere appropriate.

However, I have been asked to let you know that there are two clubs in the locality that you may not be aware of, each of which is ideally situated away from residential areas etc.

One club is located between Walkern and Watton-at-Stone and the other one is the Knebworth Model Aircraft Club (<http://www.kmfc.co.uk/>) which operates from a field near the Novatel Hotel off junction 7 of the A1(M).

We wish you every success in promoting your sport.”

Action: J. Allsop

• Rats in sportsfield

Mr. Meischke read out the following e-mail, dated 12th September, from Serena Gray.

‘I am writing to you to complain about rats coming out the bins and running through the bushes in the park in Watton-at-Stone, Herts.

I took my 3 year old to the park today 11/09/14 and to come across that vermin was awful that I didn't let my daughter play in the park.

I reported it to East Herts, who have said it down to the Parish Council to deal with it.

I have reported it to the villages' MP as well.

The park is the meadow in School Lane and the bin is by the swings where I saw the rat.

Could something be done about this ASAP’

Mrs. McCash said that there are child friendly rattraps at the Hartham Common play area.

After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed to ask Fred Burnell to put down child friendly rattraps.

Action: H. McCash

Serena Gray to be notified of the Parish Council's action.

Action: J. Allsop

• Watton Green

Tony Bradford e-mailed (on 16th September) to update the Parish Council on work he has been doing at the Cottage Site at Watton Green.

A copy of this e-mail to be forwarded to all Parish Councillors.

Action: J. Allsop

- **E-mail from Monty Northcott**

Mr. Meischke read out an e-mail, dated 15th September, from Monty Northcott as follows.

‘May I suggest to the Parish Council that a Pedestrian Crossing is place opposite our Super Market and the lane leading to the cricket field and a short cut to the housing estate.

To help the following for residents to cross the road safely:-

1. Senior Citizens living in the flats opposite the cricket field.
2. The path leading to the village school.
3. The same path to the children's play area.

The current crossing higher up is not used as it does not lead anywhere.

The elderly cross the road to the shop for their daily newspapers and Mother's with very young children, to get to the school and on the way back to visit the coffee/tea shop.

The alternate is 'traffic calming', not popular.

Perhaps your committee would consider this for a recommendation to the Council's traffic committee.

No doubt, you have notice the increase in traffic using the village with the new housing estate, the school run and a short cut from the A1 to the A10.

Mr. Stock suggested that at this point we respond as follows.

‘Please be assured that the Parish Council is very aware and concerned about the traffic and pedestrian-safety issues in High Street, as it is with those in Station Road, and continues with its endeavours to make the road safer for all who use or have to cross it. We are currently in discussion with Hertfordshire County Council and other parties to make them aware of the issues and to explore possible solutions.’

Parish Councillors were in agreement. The Clerk to e-mail Mr. Northcott accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**

11 Village organisations

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

Mr. Stock said that he would be attending a meeting of the War Memorial Management Committee to be held on 24th September.

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

- **Watton Youth Drop Inn:** Nothing to report.

- **River Beane Restoration Association**

Mr. Knight reminded Parish Councillors that tickets are still available to see the film “Banks of the River Beane”.

The film was produced in collaboration between the River Beane Restoration Association (RBRA) and the University of Hertfordshire about the plight of our local chalk stream, the river Beane. This historic river has suffered decades of unsustainable water abstraction and the film explains what went wrong, and what is being done about it. It's a heritage tale about a precious resource that must be shared!

- **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**

Mrs. Stanley said she would be attending the next meeting of the Pre-School Playgroup in October

- **Watton-at-Stone Sports & Social Club**

Ms. Waltham said she attended a meeting of the Sports and Social Club last week, but had nothing of significance to report.

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

12 Items for Parish News

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

- New Homes bonus funding.

Action: I. Knight

- Traffic concerns in the High Street and Station Road

Action: J. Allsop

- **The meeting closed at 2115.**

- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 21st October 2014.**