

## Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2015

<b>Present:</b>	Mr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman)	Mrs. Christine Dinnin
	Mr. Denis Filer	Mr. Iain Harris
	Mr. Ian Knight	Mrs. Helen McCash
	Mrs. Margaret Stanley	Mr. David Stock
	Ms. Emma Waltham	
<b>Police:</b>	Sergeant Duncan Wallace	
<b>Members of public</b>	Mr Anthony Everett (from 1920)	

### 1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence: Mr. Michael Smith (Chairman) and the Clerk (Mrs. Jane Allsop).

### 2 Public Participation

Mr. Everett who lives in High Elms Lane was concerned about the inadequate drainage resulting in standing water at the junction of High Elms Lane and Walkern Road, which became treacherous in freezing conditions. Hertfordshire Highways had installed a French drain a couple of years back to try to solve the problem but it was understood that the pipe to the drain was blocked with tree roots and Herts Highways had no money to resolve the problem. He had also raised the matter with Rik Sharma (District Councillor) and Ken Crofton (County Councillor) who had advised him to bring the matter to the attention of the Parish Council. It was suggested that Mr. Everett should send a letter to the Parish Council, with supporting letters from other residents, which the Parish Council could then forward to Hertfordshire Highways.

#### • Sergeant Duncan Wallace

Sergeant Wallace said that since our previous meeting there had been four offences, which was a reduction of one from the same period last year when there were five. DC Kirsty Richardson and PCSO Sally Brooks have been actively placing notices on inappropriately parked vehicles. They continued to carry out foot patrols, and had visited Rainbows and will visit the Scouts in March.

An abandoned car in Motts Close had been investigated – Police Aware Sticker applied and Council informed.

Other traffic enforcement work had been carried out and there had been reports of a drone over Great Innings/Beane Road area.

Drug searches had been carried out on young people, motor-vehicle related in one case.

A talk had been given to Glebe Court residents about the safety of money.

Sergeant Wallace agreed to attend the Highways meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> March (see Traffic along Station Road).

Sergeant Wallace had attended the meeting at Woodhall Park, at which some councillors were also present.

Ms. Waltham explained the problems caused by the pod-seating and the removal of trees in Great Innings play area, and the correspondence with Ian Sharratt (see item 7 g, Specific items - Great Innings play area). She had been informed that changes could only be considered if local police were unable to do any more. Sergeant Wallace said that there were insufficient police officers in the East Herts rural area to be able to increase patrols and they could not be there all the time. He agreed take the matter up again with the anti-social behaviour team.

Pass on thanks to DC Kirsty Richardson for keeping up the number of foot patrols especially during the evening.

### 3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

None.

### 4 Declaration of Interests

None.

### 5 Minutes of the last meeting

#### a) Acceptance.

- Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015  
Parish Councillors approved the minutes.

**b) Review of actions**

1. **Ask Police to put an appropriate notice on the windscreen of vehicles parked inappropriately in the village**

Police have been active in placing notices on inappropriately parked cars.

Correspondence from Michael Adams was noted but it was agreed that no further response was necessary.

2. **Write to Great Northern railway asking them to reinstate the Station carpark sign**

Correspondence between the Clerk and Great Northern Railway was noted.

This item to remain on the agenda until resolved.

**Agenda: 03/15**

3. **Come up with a design plan for bespoke bus shelter by Arms-houses**

This item is ongoing.

**Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke**

4. **Arrange for the MPPA fence to be repaired**

This item is ongoing.

**Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke**

**c) Action points resolved**

1. **E-mail Mr. Meischke the gas consumption figures for the past two years** - Refer to item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee.
2. Speak to both Mr. & Mrs. Beatty and Dr. & Mrs. Norden re memorial tree
3. Arrange for two memorial benches to be installed
4. Arrange for the Nigel Poulton memorial tree to be planted
5. E-mail HCC re Street lighting ownership
6. Add all the coordinates for Watton Green and the Lammas onto an ordnance survey map
7. Include 9-month inspection report in the Community Hall and Parish Council accounts for 2014/15
8. Inspect Total Contract Cleaners work weekly
9. Purchase timber to repair tree seat at Watton Green and 6 specimen trees
10. Liaise with Maurice Gordon, (Ramblers Association) re memorial tree
11. Speak to Peter Phillips re ferreting license for the Cottage site
12. Ask Watton School to cut back their hedge
13. Upload the Parish Council meeting dates for the Civic year 2105/16
14. Write Parish News entry

**d) Items outstanding for more than two months**

1. **Forward emergency traffic incident action plan for the village to all Parish Councillors**

Mrs. McCash said that appropriate arrangements had been agreed with the police, although there was nothing in writing.

This item to be removed from the agenda.

2. **Inspect brackets on Church Walk bench**

Mark Blacktin had been asked to carry out repairs to the bench.

This item to remain on the agenda until resolved.

**Agenda: 03/15**

3. **Chase Tony Bradford re inspection of Elm Trees on the Lammas**

To be considered at the next Parish Council meeting.

**Agenda: 03/15**

4. **Transfer New Homes Bonus funds to deposit account:** outstanding.

**Action: J. Allsop**

The Clerk is waiting until all of the 2014 New Homes Bonus grants have been paid before transferring the remaining New Homes Bonus bunds to the Parish Council's deposit account.

5. **Agree a fire inspection policy for the Community Hall**

Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall Trustees.

6. **Come up with a strategy for the Community Hall, based on Louise Beaton's report**

Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall Trustees.

**6 Planning**

Mr. Harris reported on the following items.

**a) Applications**

- i) **32 Lammas Road (3/15/0128/FP)**

First floor rear and single storey rear extensions, front velux rooflight

Mrs Dinnin and Mr Knight visited the neighbours and no objections or comments had been made. However, it was agreed that in accordance with our policy on the matter we make clear our concerns about the loss of the garage at this address.

In view of the need for a rapid reply due to the deadline for this application, Mr Harris agreed to send our response to the planning department accordingly.

**Action: Mr. Harris**

It was noted that planning permission was no longer needed for garage conversions and the Parish Council's policy would therefore need to be reviewed.

Ms Waltham said that the off-street parking spaces in front of the garages on Gatekeeper Meadow were not deep enough for a car.

**ii) 12 Lammas Road (3/15/0051/FP)**

First floor rear extension and loft conversion

Mrs. Dinnin and Mr. Knight visited neighbours and no objections or comments had been made. It was agreed that the Clerk be asked to send a 'No comment' response to the planning department.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**b) Decisions**

None.

**7 Specific items**

**a) Traffic along Station Road and the High Street**

A site meeting is to be held on 20<sup>th</sup> March at 1100. The planned attendees comprise Sir Oliver Heald MP, Ken Crofton (County Councillor), HCC, and Parish Councillors David Stock, Mike Smith and Helen McCash. Emma Waltham gave her apologies as she is unable to attend on this date.

Mr. Stock reminded Parish Councillors of his latest letter to HCC and said that no reply or acknowledgement had been received. It was agreed that a copy of this letter and the one from HCC which it addresses be attached to these minutes. **See attached**

He also said that the Clerk was keeping a file of the correspondence concerning the issues in Station Road and the related complaints we have received.

It was noted that the widened section of road adjacent to the Gatekeeper Meadow development had recently been re-surfaced and footpath extensions added to reach the kerb-side crossing points to the road.

Mr. Stock recalled that when the Parish Council reviewed the plans for the Gatekeeper Meadow development we were insistent that the green 'buffer zone' shown between the houses and Station Road must be built and retained. In practice this 'buffer zone' turned out not to be as large as anticipated and with less tree planting than expected. However, he felt that because of the importance of this green area it must be protected and we should therefore resist any suggestions that it could be used to accommodate a lay-by(s). The majority of Parish Councillors agreed.

**b) Traffic along the High Street**

The Clerk to confirm that Mrs. Stanley's revised report had been submitted to Hertfordshire Highways and to re-circulate the revised report to all Parish Councillors.

**Action: Jane Allsop**

**c) Bus shelters**

This item is ongoing and to remain on the agenda.

**Agenda: 03/15**

**d) Nigel Poulton memorial bench and tree**

The bench has been installed and the tree has been planted. The delivery of a plaque is awaited.

**e) Street lighting**

The Clerk was not present at the meeting to update Parish Councillors on this matter so the subject to be carried forward to our next meeting.

**Agenda: 03/15**

**f) Registration of land in Parish Council ownership**

This item is ongoing and to remain on the agenda.

**Agenda: 03/15**

**g) Great innings play area**

Emma Waltham was still in correspondence with Ian Sharratt but felt that the views of local residents were not being taken in to consideration. As a number of trees and bushes had been removed the play area was now very open, allowing the noise to travel more easily. The position of the seating pods opposite each other added to the noise problem as it encouraged young people to shout across the park. EHDC are reluctant to make changes unless the problems are unable to be controlled by local police. The situation regarding trees and seating had been discussed in the consultation. Blatant unacceptable behaviour was occurring, including the use of drugs and alcohol during the daytime as well as other times of day.

**h) Green Belt**

Refer to item below, 7 i, Specific items - District Plan.

**i) District Plan**

The Parish Council expressed their thanks to Mr. Smith for the tremendous amount of work he has done behind the scenes. Mr. Harris suggested that it was now up to EHDC to consider the responses to the draft plan and come up with an amended draft sometime in March. At that stage, further representation might be made.

The contents of Adam Welch's e-mail (dated 9<sup>th</sup> February) to Mr. Smith were noted. The Parish Council has agreed that the preservation of the green belt surrounding the village was an important issue which should be focussed on. Mr. Smith to respond to Adam Welch, if he has not already done so.

**Action: M. Smith**

It was agreed to check with the Clerk about whether we had received a response to our original objection, the timescale for the revised plan and whether the Parish Council had done everything it could reasonably done to date.

This item to remain on the agenda.

Agenda: 03/15

**j) Ferreting license for cottage site**

A ferreting license for the Cottage site has been issued to Peter Phillips, who has returned a signed copy to the Parish Council.

**k) Seat in High Street**

It was agreed that a replacement seat would be purchased and the new highly coloured one could be located by the new play equipment.

Action: J. Meischke/ M. Smith

**8 Sub-Committees**

**a) Budget & Finance**

Mr. Filer reported on the following items concerning the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee.

- Monthly accounts

**Watton-at-Stone Parish Council**

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty cash - Payments	
None		None	
<b>Cheques issued</b>			
Weasdale Nurseries Ltd	trees		262.96
Beane Valley Children's Centre	10 laptops - 2014 New Homes Bonus grant		2,999.90
For Dots and Tots	2014 New Homes bonus grant - toys		204.66
Mark Blacktin	Install Nigel Poulton memorial bench on concrete base		322.00
Mark Blacktin	Replace advertising signage (notice boards) by village shop		465.00
Mark Blacktin	Replace small waste bins with larger ones		60.00
Mike smith	Tree stuff - 2 invoices		160.29
Mike smith	Land Registry map fees		40.81
Wages and salary	February 2015		1090.03
War Memorial Hall	Hertford glass - 2014 New Homes bonus grant		1,283.40
East Herts District Council	Dog bin emptying		567.92
Adam Welch	Annual tree inspection		130.00
For Dots and Tots	2014 New Homes bonus grant – 10 storage boxes		112.50
Hertfordshire County Council	Stationery- £15.12, Dots & Tots grant- £598.24		<u>613.36</u>
			<b><u>8,312.83</u></b>
<b>Cheques received</b>			
None			

**Watton-at-Stone Community Hall**

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
Carla Beach – Pavilion and meeting room	126.00	keys	16.00
Vince Geoff - Main Hall and meeting room	104.00		<b><u>16.00</u></b>
Vicki Roos – Meeting room	63.00		
Mike – Watton under 9s – Main Hall	30.00		
Estelle Smith - Pavilion	21.00		
Sarah Mayberry Main Hall and Pavilion	64.00		
Robyn Meyer - Pavilion	28.00		
Jo Joel - Main Hall and Pavilion	39.00		
	<b><u>475.00</u></b>		
<b>Cheques issued</b>			
Wages	February 2015		145.23
Total Contract Cleaners	cleaning on 1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd December		120.00
Hertfordshire County Council	Cleaning material		<u>70.39</u>
			<b><u>335.62</u></b>
<b>Cheques received</b>			
Dave Boddy	Main Hall and Pavilion hire		336.60
Karate	Main Hall		<u>151.20</u>
			<b><u>487.80</u></b>

Parish Councillors agreed the payments.

- **British gas contracts**

Mr. Filer explained the various difficulties and billing errors which had been experienced with British Gas over the last 2 years or so. Although matters had been largely resolved, Mr. Filer recommended that an alternative supplier be sourced – all agreed.

It was agreed that Mr. Filer, Mr. Meischke and the Clerk should decide on the best alternative supplier – all agreed. **Action: D. Filer/J. Meischke /J. Allsop**

It was agreed that the existing direct debit would be cancelled. **Action: D. Filer /J. Allsop**

- **Pensions**

Consideration of correspondence from the Pensions Regulator would be placed on next agenda.

**Agenda: 03/15**

Mr. Filer and Mrs. McCash left the meeting.

### Community Hall Trustees

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

- **Report and minutes of meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2015**

Report and minutes noted.

Because Mr. Meischke has been on a Child-Safeguarding course, he has agreed to prepare a proposal for a Child-Safeguarding Policy, which he will discuss with Mr. Stock and Mr. Harris. **Action: J. Meischke**

- **Weekly fire equipment inspection**

Rosemary Brown has been asked to inspect fire appliances weekly on a weekly basis to ensure that they are in situ and undamaged. The Clerk to purchase a diary to record the inspection details. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Development of the Community Hall**

It was agreed that a meeting to discuss the development of the Community Hall be deferred until the new Parish Council is in place in May 2015.

- **Pavilion window and door**

Mr. Meischke said that Hertford Glass, Ekins and Stevenage Glass all supplied estimates of approximately the same value to replace the large bank of windows and fire exit doors in the Pavilion. Stevenage Glass suggested that if we dealt directly with fabricators, SJM, as it would reduce the cost. To that end, Mr. Meischke, Mr. Stock and Mr. Smith met with SJM and are now awaiting new design and quotation.

### Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **Sportsfield**

Nothing to report.

- **MPPA**

Nothing to report.

Mrs. McCash returned to the meeting.

### Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Allotments**

Section 106 money progressing through consultation with officers; they will keep Mr. Smith updated.

- **Watton Green**

New trees planted - thank you letter received from Maurice Gordon on behalf of member of Ramblers Association.

- **Lammas**

Meeting with Tom Goldsmith - footpath officer - to see if PP3 grant can be given for additional work to footpath 36 - Lammas river footpath.

Mrs Dinnin said that Adam Welch had carried-out the Annual Tree Inspection. Condition of trees are graded from 1 – 10 (1 being good).

The report to be circulated for comments.

**Action: C. Dinnin/J. Allsop**

## New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee

Nothing to report

### b) Routine Reports

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

The emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm was completed on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> February.

#### ii) Monthly village-report

Mr. Stock completed the report on 13<sup>th</sup> February.

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

Some of the negative observations in his report were confirmed to be in hand or covered elsewhere.

There appears to be a problem with litter in some planted areas in Moorymead Close, i.e., along the station-side of the road. It was agreed that we write to the developers of the site to establish who is responsible for litter clearance in this area.

#### • Fly-posting

It has been noted by Parish Councillors that there has been a substantial increase in the amount of posters being put up on trees, lampposts, telegraph poles and railings etc. throughout the village.

Apart from some being a distraction to motorists, the posters and advertising banners have become a very untidy sight and many are left in situ even though they are long out-of-date. It was agreed that we need to ensure that posters for one-off events are removed soon after the event being advertised.

This subject together with the posting of commercial adverts to be discussed further during our next meeting.

**Agenda: 03/15**

#### iii) Weekly sportsfield

Nothing to report.

#### iv) Website

None.

#### vi) Highway and Lighting faults

None.

## 9 Correspondence received

### a) E-mail from Adam Welch

Refer to item 7 i, Specific items – District Plan.

#### • Letter regarding Consultation on Bus Service

HCC next round of public consultation on the bus service commenced on 19<sup>th</sup> January and is due to end on 10<sup>th</sup> April.

David Humby (34 Rivershill) e-mailed on 18<sup>th</sup> February to highlight the proposals to withdraw the early morning 390 services to Hertford and Stevenage, which if implemented would mean that the first bus to Hertford would be at 0943 and 1023 to Stevenage, which is unacceptable.

It was agreed to place a notice about the HCC bus consultation in the March issue of the Parish News urging parishioners to respond. This item to be placed on the March Parish Council agenda to agree a response.

**Agenda: 03/15**

#### • E-mail from Claudia Eleady-Cole regarding the Annual Community Day in August

Request for grants to sponsor the event. It was agreed that the Parish Council's contribution is the free use of Community Hall facilities.

#### • Parish Council Land in Rivershill

Request from Mr. Wilkinson (who owns the land at the other side but unable to access it) to cross Parish Council land. Mr. Meischke to meet with him to discuss details.

**Action: J. Meischke**

## 10 Village organisations

- **Wotton-at-Stone War Memorial Hall Management Committee:** Very pleased with new windows funded from New Homes Bonus.
- **Wotton-at-Stone Scout & Guide Group:** Nothing to report.
- **Wotton Youth Drop Inn**  
Mr. Meischke reported that Wotton Youth Drop Inn is still closed. However, a meeting to discuss the future of the club is arranged for Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February.
- **River Beane Restoration Association**  
The film titled ‘On the Banks of the Beane’ will be shown at the War Memorial Hall on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2015.
- **Wotton-at-Stone School Governors:** Nothing to report.
- **Wotton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Watch:** Nothing to report.
- **Wotton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association:** Nothing to report.
- **Wotton-at-Stone Pre-School Playgroup:** Nothing to report.
- **Wotton-at-Stone Sports & Social Club:** Nothing to report.
- **Police Authority**  
Mrs. McCash and Mr. Meischke attended the Police Liaison Barn meeting held at Home Farm, Woodhall Park, on 9<sup>th</sup> February. Questions they raised at the meeting were not answered to their satisfaction.

## 11 Items for Parish News

The following items were identified for inclusion in the March 2015 issue of the Parish News.

- Consultation on Bus Services supported by Hertfordshire County Council
- Parish Council Elections
- Civic Calendar dates

**Action: I. Knight**

- **The meeting closed at 2100.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2015.**