

**Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

**Present:** Mr. Michael Smith (Chairman) Mr. John Meischke  
 Mr. Denis Filer Mr. Ian Knight  
 Mrs. Margaret Stanley Mr. David Stock  
 Dr. Emma Waltham Mrs. Jane Allsop (Clerk)

**Members of public:** Mr. David Humby (until 2010)  
 Mr. Chris Long (until 2046)

**1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence: Mrs. Christine Dinnin and Mrs. Helen McCash.

**2 Public Participation**

Mr. Smith asked the members of public if they wished to speak at the meeting or had any special interest in any of the agenda items.

Mr. Humby said that he was interested in item 7 b, Traffic along Station Road: 7 c, Traffic along the High Street and 7 g, 390 Bus Service.

Mr. Long expressed an interest in item 7 g, 390 Bus Service.

**3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report**

Neither Sergeant Duncan Wallace nor D. C. Kirsty Richardson were able to attend the Parish Council meeting tonight.

D. C. Kirsty Richardson has e-mailed her report of the last month's policing incidents in Watton-at-Stone to the Clerk. The Clerk to forward this e-mail to all Parish Councillors. **Action: J. Allsop**

**4 Declaration of Interests**

None.

**5 Minutes of the last meeting**

**a) Acceptance**

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2015**  
 Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved.

**b) Review of actions**

- 1. Contact EHC re litterpick bags and request additional litterpick wheelie bin**  
 The Clerk said that East Herts Council have agreed that Ted Brown can remove the blue bags from the litterbins that are full in his area and replace them with the pink ones they issue for his litterpicking duties. East Herts Council were very concerned, for health and safety reasons, that Ted Brown was emptying the contents of the blue bins and transferring them into his pink bags. They will be monitoring the level of rubbish in the village bins on a more regular basis. They have also supplied Ted Brown with an additional wheelie bin.
- 2. Arrange for change of bank signatories**  
 The Clerk said that the bank change of signature forms need signing by both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The Clerk to arrange for Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke to sign the forms. **Action: J. Allsop**
- 3. Speak to the Moray family re this memorial seat in the High Street**  
 Mrs. Dinnin was not present at the meeting to report on this item. **Action: C. Dinnin**
- 4. Write modification for Risk Assessment re Clerk's salary and pay roll**  
 The Clerk said that Mrs. McCash would be sending Mr. Filer the modified wording soon. **Action: H. McCash**
- 5. Chase Thames Water re their fence at Moorymead Close**  
 The Clerk said she and Robert Taylor, met on site with Sam Hill (Thames Water) on 6<sup>th</sup> August and agreed what modifications were required to the fence to allow a clear line of site to drivers exiting the adjacent driveway which serves flats number 24-28 Moorymead Close. The fence was realigned on 27<sup>th</sup> August and Robert Taylor e-mailed the Clerk stating that the work has been done as agreed and he can now see clearly when pulling out of his driveway onto Moorymead Close. The Clerk said she had also inspected the work. The Clerk said to her knowledge Highways had not responded to the original complaint made by Robert Taylor regarding the fence hazard.

**6. Arrange date for public meeting re Neighbourhood Plan/District Plan**

Refer to item 7 d, Neighbourhood Plan update and future meeting

**7. E-mail suggestions re revisions to Long-term-capital expenditure document**

Mr. Filer said that he had only had one comment from Mr. Stock who suggested at the July Parish Council meeting that the items identified in columns >10 years should be moved over to >5 years, likewise >15 years should be moved to column >10 years. The Clerk said she had e-mailed all Parish Councillors the revised document the day after the July meeting. Mr. Filer said he never received her e-mail.

The Clerk to forward her original e-mail to all Parish Councillors.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**8. Inspect railing adjacent to Community Hall to see if they need painting**

Mr. Meischke said that the railing have been painted.

**9. Inspect overhanging hedges on Walkern Road that are obscuring exiting Beane Road**

This action point is outstanding. Although both Mrs. Dinnin and Mr. Knight are not too bothered by the hedging obscuring visibility, the Clerk said when driving her car which has a long bonnet, she has to go out into the carriageway by almost a third to obtain clear visibility.

It was agreed that the Clerk speak to the residents of 15 Walkern Road and write to the residents at 17a Walkern Road.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**c) Action points resolved**

1. Give Sergeant Duncan Wallace the owner contact details for the Mill Lane

**2. Arrange to meet with District Councillor Michael Freeman re Great Innings play area**

Dr. Waltham said she had not contacted either District Councillor Michael Freeman or Julie Pomfrett (East Herts Council) to arrange a meeting because the problems at the Great Innings play area has significantly quietened down. The youths appear to have moved to the MPPA and sportsfield areas.

Dr Waltham said that she had spoken to the neighbours adjacent to the Great Innings play area and they are happy to let sleeping dogs lie for the moment and take action if the problem arises again in the future.

Parish Councillors agreed with this decision.

**Arrange to meet with Julie Pomfrett (EHC) re Great Innings play area**

Refer to the above item.

3. Deliver Neighbourhood flyer

**4. Generate a new notice for the MPPA**

Mr. Knight said that he was deferring having a notice made until he had spoken to the footballers about their use of the MPPA for football practise.

**Action: I. Knight**

**5. Obtain quotations for painting the swings on the sportsfield**

Mr. Meischke e-mailed all Parish Councillors on 20<sup>th</sup> August with an estimate for replacement both sets of swings and the see saw at £33k including supply installation and the fitting of safety surface. All Parish Councillors agreed, via e-mail, that this option was too expensive at the current time and the swings should be repainted.

Parish Councillors agreed, via e-mail, to accept Mick Taylors quotation of £350 labour for burning off the old paint and repaint both sets of swings. Mr. Meischke said he will obtain the Hammerite paint from Chas Lowe and Parish Councillors chose a mid-blue colour from the limited colour-palette available.

Mick Taylor will start the work during the last week of September.

**Action: J. Meischke**

6. Obtain posters from the Air Ambulance re clothes recycling bin

7. Produce Parish Councillor Vacancy notice

8. Contact Jeff Hughes re Vacancy

9. E-mail comments to Ben Biggins re HCC draft Station Road meeting minutes

10. E-mail revised HCC Station Road meeting minutes to all Parish Councillors

11. Attach minutes to July minutes as a record

12. Modify the planning protocol accordingly and raise it to Edition 6

13. Obtain quotation for the cutting of the hedge on the boundary of Mr. Brett's property

14. Contact Thames Water re repair to the damaged parget in School Lane

15. Respond to EHC re Village Hierarchy Study 2015

16. Include Mrs. McCash's 3-monthly inspection report in 2015/16 accounts

17. E-mail revised Long-term-capital expenditure document to all Parish Councillors

18. Discuss Community Hall hourly charges at Trustees meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> August

19. Display conclusion of audit notice on the Parish Council notice boards

20. Give Mr. Stock comments on Child safety-guarding policy

21. Forward e-mail re development of Community Hall

22. Liaise with Mr. Meischke re shower system

23. Generate a new notice for the change of priority usage times on the MPPA

24. Arrange a moss-kill on the MPPA

25. Water young trees on Watton Green
26. **Pursue with the Church the possibility of using part of the allotments as a cremation burial ground**  
Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Allotments.
27. Write to Bob Adams Done and Roger Bridges re ferreting licenses
28. Modify application for funding document to incorporate a form
29. Update New Homes Bonus funding poster
30. Obtain quotations for new tennis court including lighting and archaeology survey
31. Contact Hertfordshire Highways re repair to pelican crossing
32. Write Parish News articles for inclusion in the September issue

**d) Action points outstanding**

1. **Continue to chase HCC re Station Car Park sign in Station Road until installed**  
The Clerk said that the Station Car Park sign has not been re-installed. She agreed to e-mail Chris Simpson (Senior Engineer, Development Management, HCC) again to ask for an update and copy County Councillor Ken Crofton. **Action: J. Allsop**
2. **Upload Parish Council toolkit documents to the Parish Council website and update tool kit folders**  
This action point is in progress. **Action: J. Allsop**
3. **Produce contents list for Parish Councillors Tool Kit folder and webpage**  
This action point is in progress. **Action: M. Stanley/J. Allsop**
4. **Arrange for referees changing room to be cleared out**  
Mr. Knight said that he had looked in the referee changing room and there are some referee coats and some wet weather clothing hanging up as well as the barriers that fit on the top of traffic cones.  
It was agreed to store the barriers in the small outside storeroom (the disused toilets). **Action: J. Meischke**

**6 Planning**

Mrs. McCash was not present at the meeting to report on the following items; however, she did provide the Clerk with her report.

**a) Applications**

- i) **14 Rivershill (3/15/1580/HH)**  
Two -storey side and rear extension, single storey rear extension  
Mr. Meischke said that he spoke to both neighbours. One neighbour was not bothered until he was told that what appeared to be a garage was actually marked as a storeroom because it is too small to house a car. The proposed extension does not allow sufficient room for three cars to park on the current driveway, which is the allocation number of vehicle spaces required for a property of this size. The other neighbour was also concerned about the parking, but neither made an official complaint.  
Mrs. McCash e-mailed all Parish Councillors this information and after agreement with Parish Councillors instructed the Clerk to write to East Herts Council as follows.  
‘The Parish Council are concerned that with the loss of a Garage, enough parking will be provided within the site for off-road parking.’
- ii) **Heath MountSchool (3/15/0772/VAR)**  
Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) of planning permission 3/14/0721/FP for erection of six replacement classrooms and performing arts space  
This application is a small variation to a previously approved planning application. Mrs. McCash e-mailed Parish Councillors and the Clerk was instructed to write a no comment response to East Herts Council.

**b) Decisions**

- i) **15 Beane Road (3/15/1024/HH)**  
Single-storey rear extension - East Herts Council – granted  
37 Moorymead Close (3/15/1276/HH)  
Single storey rear extension and front porch extension (Amendment to approved scheme 3/15/0419/HH) - East Herts Council – granted
- iii) **3 Hockerill (3/15/1026/HH)**  
Two -storey rear extension - East Herts Council – granted

**7 Specific items**

**a) Parish Councillor Vacancy applications**

Refer to item directly after item 11 - Items for Parish News.

**b) Traffic along Station Road**

Mr. Stock said that he and the other five Parish Councillors who attended felt that our meeting with Ben Biggin (HCC), Michael Stutley (HCC) and County Councillor Ken Crofton Ken Crofton on 2<sup>nd</sup> September was a very positive one and our previous concerns and comments had been taken into account.

However, it was unfortunate that Mr. Stock did not receive the draft minutes of the meeting from HCC until yesterday evening, therefore not giving him/us any time to comment on them so they could be formally issued and thus presented to this Parish Council meeting.

He said that he had noted some errors and omissions in the draft minutes and it was important that we ensure that our comments and concerns are clearly stated. To this end, he has e-mailed a copy of HCC's draft minutes to the five Parish Councillors and asked that they give him any comments they may have by this Friday (11<sup>th</sup> September).

**Action: Parish Councillors involved**

Mr. Stock expressed some of his concerns about adequate signage, lay-by parking, its effect and sight-lines. He will ensure that these concerns are made clear to HCC in his responses to their draft minutes.

Mr. Stock to send his and any other comments and revisions on HCC's draft minutes to Ben Biggin.

**Action: D. Stock**

It was pleasing to see that Ben Biggin had taken time to visit Station Road at different times of the day and at weekends. In doing so, he could see that there was very little or no parking at all adjacent to the Gatekeeper Meadow development during the evening or at weekends.

Mr. Humby said when he first brought the line-of-sight problem to the Parish Council's attention in March 2015, he made them aware that part of the planning condition for this development was to ensure that there was a clear line-of-sight for traffic exiting Clappers Lane onto Station Road. Drivers that are emerging from the development are required to have a clear line-of-sight both to the right-hand and left-hand sides when leaving the development and if required, a visibility obstruction needs to be installed in order that drivers can see clearly up and down the road. This also relates to the speed of the roads in the area. He also stated this particular problem should be resolved under planning control and the costs borne by the developers and currently there appears to be a non-compliance with the planning permission for Gatekeeper Meadow.

Mr. Stock told Mr. Humby that the Parish Council has made the very same point to HCC who accept that there is an issue and are addressing it. That said, it is not possible for us to comment further on sight-lines until we are given drawings of the proposed solutions to the pedestrian-safety and traffic issues that we have strived to resolve.

Mr. Humby said that he had spoken to District Councillor Michael Freeman and was mindful to write and complain about the line-of-sight issue. Mr. Smith said that the Parish Council would not wish to stop him from doing so.

**c) Traffic along High Street**

Mr. Stock said that the traffic issues in the High Street fall under the same umbrella as those in Station Road because HCC is dealing with both together.

He said that the HCC proposals for the High Street are progressing well and again they have taken our comments and requests into account.

It is hoped that the plans for Station Road and the High Street will be available for public consultation before the end of this year.

**d) Neighbourhood Plan update and future meeting**

Mr. Smith said that the Green Belt review has been completed. The review considered 71 pieces of Green Belt in East Hertfordshire and tested them against various models.

The results for the Green Belt at Watton-at-Stone are as follows.

1. Restricting sprawl – of major importance
2. Safeguarding the Countryside – of major importance
3. Preserve setting and special character – of major importance
4. Preventing settlements merging – low importance
5. To prevent encroachment from major towns – low importance
6. Overall suitability for development is LOW

Watton-at-Stone received a favourable score for items 1 to 4 with item 5 scoring poorly. The Green Belt review identified more suitable sites in other areas of East Hertfordshire. Mr. Smith said that although the overall results for Watton-at-Stone in the Green Belt review were in our favour, it is difficult to say if East Herts Council will be persuaded to reduce Watton-at-Stone's housing requirement

East Herts Council should have their pre-submission plan available by the end of October. Mr. Smith suggested that the Parish Council should hold their public meeting to discuss the District Plan and Neighbourhood plan on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November in the Nigel Poulton Community Hall.

Parish Councillors agreed to check their diaries and confirm that this date is acceptable.

**Action: Parish Councillors**

Mr. Smith said that plans had been submitted to East Herts Council for development of the Walkern Road site as defined in the Draft Plan

The Parish Council, together with District Councillor Michael Freeman, wrote to HCC asking them to develop the Yard in station road. A similar letter needs to be sent to East Herts Council re their land at Great Innings adjacent to the former Doctors surgery. **Action: M. Smith**

Mr. Smith will be asking Mr. Abel Smith for clarification of proposals for the School Lane site.

**e) Thames Water repair to sewer in School Lane its junction adjacent to the Community Hall**

Thames Water repaired the damaged concrete parget (the smooth rounded surface of the drain) on 14<sup>th</sup> July.

**f) Watton book swap**

Parish Councillors agreed that they were happy for District Councillor Michael Freeman to pursue a Watton-at-Stone book-swap using the Community Hall

The Clerk to notify Mr. Freeman accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**

**g) 390 Bus service**

Mr. Humby said that at our March 2015 meeting he informed the Parish Council that HCC were holding a public consultation on changes to bus services in the county in order to achieve budget savings for 2015 and beyond. The changes would affect the Saturday services on the 390 and proposals to withdraw the early morning weekday 390 services to Hertford and Stevenage which if implemented would mean that the first bus to Hertford would be at 0943 to Hertford and 1023 to Stevenage. This would have a detrimental effect on people from the village (particularly the young and elderly) who wish to travel to work, business or shop in either town.

Mr. Smith said that District Councillor Michael Freeman has helped persuade the operators of the commercially run 390 service to retain the first weekday service and reinstate some of the Saturday services. However, it looks to be a short reprieve for the 390 service because the service is losing money and if it is not used more it will be scrapped. Mr. Long has been in e-mail communication with Mr. Freeman regarding the changes in the 390 timetable.

Mr. Humby pointed out that the timetables displayed at the bus stops had not been updated although the new service started 10 days ago.

The Parish Council to write to HCC asking them to update the bus stop timetables. **Action: J. Allsop**

**h) Maintenance of the Open-space arear at the rear of the Gatekeeper Meadow**

District Councillor Mike Freeman e-mailed on 2<sup>nd</sup> September as follows.

‘I have today asked EHDC what progress has been made with regard to the adoption of the land to the rear of Gatekeeper Meadow for maintenance purposes. I was advised in reply that the legal process has still not been received by EHDC and that responsibility for maintenance rests with the developer until the process is complete. In the circumstances and given developers' habit of moving on once a development is complete I intend to pursue this matter closely.

**i) Meeting with the new owners of Kimberley, High Street**

Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Meeting with new owners of Kimberley.

**j) Child-safeguarding**

Prior to this meeting, Mr. Stock e-mailed a copy of his proposal and text (which is also the Trustees recommendation) to all Parish Councillors.

The Parish Council agreed the proposal and that his text (as follows) be added to the Community Hall hire agreement under the heading of Child-Safeguarding.

‘It is of primary importance to the Nigel Poulton Community Hall Board of Trustees and to the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council that children are safe, and their welfare and well-being are maintained, during the periods in which they are involved in the use the Nigel Poulton Community Hall. This is so they can have a positive and enjoyable experience in a child-centred environment and be protected from any form of abuse, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, religion or beliefs.

With these objectives in mind, we remind everyone who hires Nigel Poulton Community Hall for an event that involves children (e.g., club nights, children’s parties) that they have and accept the responsibility of ensuring that children are safeguarded at all times while using the Community Hall and its facilities.’

The Clerk to amend the ‘Agreement for the Community Hall hirings’ accordingly and upload it to the Watton-at-Stone website. **Action: J. Allsop**

The Clerk to ask all current hirers to sign the revised agreement. **Action: J. Allsop**

The Clerk to remove the current (old) Child-Protection Statement and Child-Protection Guidelines documents from the Watton-at-Stone website and replace them with the above child-safeguarding text. **Action: J. Allsop**

Mr Humby left the meeting at 2010.

## 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>			
Adam Welch	Strim and clear allotment as discussed		70.00
Adam Welch	cut back hedge		65.00
British Telecom	12 month BT line-rental		183.48
Triographics Printers Limited	Printing - 1100 copies of Neighbourhood planning flier		68.00
Concord Trophies	Engraving two trophies and purchase 2 keep-sake trophies		46.88
Frank Cooper and Son	4 grass cut		278.40
Frank Cooper and Son	5 grass cut		348.00
Allotment and Garden	Public liability insurance		169.60
East Herts District Council	Annual Playground inspection		49.80
Wages and salaries	August 2015		<u>1161.21</u>
			<b><u>2440.37</u></b>
<b>Cheques received</b>			
None			

**Watton-at-Stone Community Hall**

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
Carla Beach – Pavilion	220.50	HCC – cleaning materials	19.32
Vince Geoff - Main Hall	164.00		<b><u>19.32</u></b>
Phillip Little – Main Hall	60.00		
Floodlighting donations from 3/6/15-2/9/15	80.00		
Kay Adams – Main Hall & Pavilion	96.00		
Melanie Hague - donation	.50		
Melanie Hague – Main Hall and Pavilion	45.50		
Becky Hill – Main Hall	24.00		
Stephen Chapel – Pavilion hire	28.00		
Stephen Peters – Main Hall and Pavilion	<u>52.00</u>		
	<b><u>770.50</u></b>		
<b>Cheques issued</b>			
PRS for Music	Annual Music Licence		250.44
Total Contract Cleaners	Hall cleaning in July 2015		120.00
Wages	August 2015		155.03
Total Contract Cleaners	Hall cleaning in August 2015		120.00
HCC	cleaning materials		<u>75.12</u>
			<b><u>720.59</u></b>
<b>Cheques received</b>			
Cricket Club	Donation towards replacement key		10.00
Mr. & Mrs. Harris	Main Hall & Pavilion		56.00
			<b><u>66.00</u></b>

Parish Councillors agreed the payments.

- **Parish Council and Community Hall reserves**

All Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of Mr. Filer’s reported titled ‘Parish Council and Community Hall Reserves’. A copy of this document is attached to these minutes. See attached

The Parish Council and Community Hall have held reserves of approximately £20,000 for many years. However, this has been reduced because of the need to replace the Pavilion windows at a total cost of £21,000, with £10,000 coming from New Homes Bonus funds and the remaining £11,000 will be taken out of reserves.

Mr. Filer said that Mr. Smith had asked him to identify a figure that should be held in reserves. Normally when considering SME’s (small and medium-sized enterprises) the reserves are based on six to nine months of normal expenditure, which would mean a figure of around £20,000 for the Parish Council

reserves based on a £30,000 precept. This confirms that the Parish Council's previous reserve levels of approximately £20,000 were correct.

Other consideration to increase reserves is to sell off some Parish Council land (i.e. land at Rivershill and the additional garden land). The possibility of using a professional adviser for advice about the sale price was discussed but no firm decision made. This item to be discussed at the October Parish Council meeting.

**Agenda: 10.15**

An increase in the annual precept of around £3,000 would help to rebuild the reserves as we would receive this year on year. Although this may not be popular with the electorate in the first year. It is the Parish Council's wish not to use the New Homes Bonus for maintenance issues but for capital improvements and grant aiding village associations.

Mr. Filer made the following recommendations in his report.

**Recommendations**

1. That the Parish Council sell unused land.
2. That the Community Hall Trustees investigate the cleaning of the hall with a view to seeing whether this can be reduced.
3. An increase in the Sports and Social Club subscription should be considered by the Parish Council although this should be kept low.
4. An increase in allotment rents should be considered by the Parish Council. (a 50% increase would bring in over £500 and would still mean that allotment rents were very low)
5. The Community Hall trustees should continue their efforts to increase rental income for the main hall and pavilion by trying to fill hiring vacancies.
6. The Parish Council should increase the precept request for the next financial year by £3000.

Mr. Filer felt that when selling unused land, appropriate experts (e.g estate agents) should be used.

Mrs. Stanley agreed to draw up an Asset Management plan for discussion at the next meeting of the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee.

**Action: M. Stanley**

- **Request for Budget items for following year**

Mr. Filer asked all Parish Councillors to e-mail him any items they would like included in the 2016/17 budget.

**Action: Parish Councillors**

Mr. Meischke said that the Trustees would be inspecting the Community Hall in October to agree any maintenance issues and would give Mr. Filer their budget items for 2016/17 after their meeting.

- **Allotment rent and water charges**

Mr. Filer said that the Parish Council wrote to all allotment holders in April 2015 advising them that allotment rents will increase from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 to £25 for a full plot and £12.50 for half a plot and that water charges would be review at the September Parish Council meeting.

The Parish Council is expecting the Affinity Water bill in the next week or two. It was agreed that if there is no significant increase in the water bill, then water charges to allotment holders will remain at £6.50 for a full plot and £3.25 for a half plot.

The Clerk to invoice all allotment holders for their plots and water charges by 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee**

Mrs. Stanley reported on the following.

- **2015 New Homes Bonus funding**

Mrs. Stanley said that the Parish Council currently has £61,179.73 of New Homes Bonus (NHB) in the bank (£42,289 received in July 2015). It has already been agreed that £10,000 of these funds is to be used towards the new wall of windows in the pavilion and approximately £10,000 has been earmarked towards the '2015 NHB funding' for village organisations.

Mrs. Stanley said that to date no applications for the 2015 NHB funding has been received. The Clerk said that in 2014 she had contacted all village organisations to make them aware of NHB funding available. It was agreed that we could do this again this year but should make this decision at the October Parish Council meeting.

Mrs. Stanley said that as a substantial amount of NHB will remain and it may be possible to do something more significant for the village, although Mr. Smith pointed out that if the Parish Council decides to go ahead with a Neighbourhood Plan it may need to consider using NHB to fund it. In addition, the Parish Council had already agreed in principal to contribute towards the provision of a new tennis court from NHB funds. It was noted that in due course, improvements would be needed to the safety surface under the swings and it would be sensible to consider replacing the swings at the same time.

Chris Long left the meeting.

Dr. Waltham said that when she first arrived in Watton-at-Stone she was aware of how well kept the village was and she hoped that it would stay in good order during our watch.

### Community Hall Trustees

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

- **Report and minutes of meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2015**

The Trustees approved the minutes, which were then signed by Mr. Meischke.

Mr. Meischke said he was not going to deliberate on the detail of the Trustees meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> August because all Parish Councillors had been e-mailed copies of the minutes.

- **Development of the Community Hall**

Mr. Meischke liked Dr. Waltham's idea, which she picked up from a village hall report, of having table tennis available at the Community Hall. The table could be stored against the wall. It was agreed to research the need for table tennis in the village.

Mr. Smith said that Anstey Parish Council have a film licence, which costs £200 per year, and allows them to screen as many films as they like.

- **Repair to roof**

Mr. Meischke said that City Roofing Contractors could not find where the roof was leaking. A blocked drain may have caused the leak or it could have been due to high wind and rain that lifted the tiles enough to allow water to get into the Community Hall. A ceiling light fitting was also damaged during the leak; this has now been repaired.

Mr. Meischke has agreed to contact City Roofing Contractors if this problem occurs again so they can see the leak while it is occurring.

- **Kitchen drawers**

Mr. Meischke said he had repaired the kitchen drawers.

The Clerk said she needed to bring 36 economy teaspoons she had purchased down to the Community Hall.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Annual inspections**

- **Electrical inspection and PAT testing**

The Annual emergency lighting and PAT testing has been completed by D. P. Electrics.

The PAT testing included items owned by the Parish Council and used by the Clerk at her home (namely: laptop-computer, printer, monitor, shredder and laminating machines).

One of the Pavilion lights which was damaged by water has had a new bulb and motor fitted.

- **Boiler service**

James Turner Limited are scheduled to do the annual boiler service on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October.

### Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **MPPA**

- **Moss Kill**

Mr. Knight said that he would be instructing Sports Courts to carry out a moss kill on the MPPA at the end of September.

**Action: I. Knight**

- **Trouble with youths**

The youths that were causing trouble at the Great Innings Play area appear to have moved on to the MPPA and sportsfield area. There have been several incidents of vandalism to both the MPPA and cricket pitch.

Mr. Knight said he was not in favour of locking the MPPA because of the youth problems, this was agreed by Parish Councillors. The time of year is in the Parish Council's favour, as the youths will soon move indoors as the weather gets colder.

- **Annual playground inspection**

Mr. Meischke said he would report on this item under 8 b, Routine Reports - Monthly village-report.

- **Sportsfield – cricket square**

Mr. Knight said that the Cricket Club would like the Parish Council to improve the cricket wicket, at an approximate cost of £1,000. The Cricket Club would give the Parish Council a donation towards the cost.

This was agreed by Parish Councillors. Mr. Knight to liaise with the Cricket Club.

**Action: I. Knight**

- **Sportsfield hedge cut**

Mr. Smith said that the sportsfield hedge cutting was completed today. Whilst the contractor, Nick Whitehead was on site doing some hand hedge cutting yesterday, he found a wasp's nest in the Church Walk side of the hedge that backs onto the play area. The Clerk contacted Fred Burnell who destroyed the wasps so that the hedge cutting could be done today.

**Environment Sub-Committee**

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

- **Allotments**

- **Disused allotment land**

Mr. Smith said that both the Church and the Cricket Club are interested in using the disused allotment land that abounds the property Kimberley. The Church would like to use the land for cremation burials and the Cricket Club for bowling practise, with permanent nets on site. Access to the land would be from Church Walk.

Mr. Smith said that the Parish Council’s lease with the Diocesan Board would allow either option. Concern was expressed about the noise cricket bowling would create which might be detrimental to local residents. However, short-term usage could be allowed and if it created a problem, the agreement could be terminated. However, the use of the land for cremation burials would be an irreversible one.

At the July Parish Council meeting, Mrs. McCash reported that the church graveyard will be full within the next 10 years and it will be the responsibility of the Parish Council to provide for burial grounds.

Mr. Knight agreed to investigate if this is the case. **Action: I. Knight**

It was agreed that a decision of the use of the disused allotment land be deferred until to the January 2016 Parish Council meeting. **Agenda: 01/2016**

Mr. Smith to arrange for this area to be cleared over the winter period. **Action: M. Smith**

- **Bonfire**

Some of the allotment holders had a bonfire, during hot weather, on the allotment, which caused thick smoke to blow into open windows, and several complaints were received from residents in Glebe Court and the High Street properties that back onto the allotment. Mr. Meischke made a site visit and got the allotment holders to put out the bonfire.

It was agreed by Parish Councillors that when the Clerk invoices the allotment holders on 1<sup>st</sup> October, she includes a copy of the East Herts Council literature on Bonfires. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Meeting with new owners of Kimberley**

Mr. Smith said that he, Mr. Meischke, Mrs. Dinnin and Mr. Knight has a productive meeting with Jonathan Aves, the new owner of Kimberley (High Street). Mr. Aves wants to cut down his hedge that adjoins the allotments to a height of three meters. Mr. Smith suggested to him that most of the hedge is full of ivy and it might be best to scrub it out and start again with new hedging plants.

Mr. Aves is also going to sort out the rabbit problem on his land which can only improve the allotments position and the Clerk has given him Bob Adam’s contact details so that he can arrange for the land to be ferreted. Mr. Aves is also been in touch with Malcolm Amey, East Herts Council to discuss trimming back some of his trees, three of which have Tree Preservation Orders on them.

- **War Memorial**

The War Memorial garden has been pruned and the plot weeded.

Mr. Meischke said that whilst carrying out the monthly village-report he noted that there was some branch debris in the War Memorial garden. It was agreed that Adam Welch would need to give the garden some further attention before Remembrance Sunday on 8<sup>th</sup> November.

Mrs. Dinnin to contact Adam Welch. **Action: C. Dinnin**

- **The Lammas**

The P3 funded work to the Abel Smith footpath from the Lammas to the Walkern Road has still not been done.

- **Mill site**

Although Sergeant Wallace was given the contact details for the owners of the Mill buildings, the site is still unsecured. It was agreed that the Parish Council contact the owners directly asking them to secure the site. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Trees on Watton Green**

At the July Parish Council meeting, it was reported that four of the six trees planted in February this year were in a very poor state and the memorial Oak tree was also in a bad condition. Mr. Smith was happy to report that all of the trees have had a miraculous recovery and are looking green and healthy. This turnaround is obviously due to the wet weather conditions experienced over the last two months.

- **Rustic bench on Watton Green**

Mr. Smith agreed to look at rustic bench on Watton Green and put together costings to refurbish/replace it. **Action: M. Smith**

- **Ferretting licences**

After discussion with Bob Adams, who expressed a wish to ferretting Watton Green and the Cottage site now that Peter Phillips is no longer ferretting them, the following licences were issued.

- **Bob Adams:** The Lammas, the paddock at the far end of the Lammas, Watton Green and the Cottage site
- **Roger Bridges:** The Lammas, the paddock at the far end of the Lammas and the Allotments.

## b) Routine Reports

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

Mr. Meischke said he would complete these inspections tomorrow

**Action: J. Meischke**

### ii) Gas and electricity meter readings

Mr. Meischke said he would take the meter readings and forward them to the Clerk. **Action: J. Meischke**

### iii) Fire Inspection

Mr. Meischke said that Rosemary Brown had not identified any problems during her weekly inspection of the fire equipment.

### iv) Monthly village-report

Mr. Meischke completed the report on 4<sup>th</sup> September.

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

- **Sportsfield grass** – just been cut, very short and patchy
- **Swing** – areas of safety surface under the swings are damaged and need weed killing.  
Mick Taylor is due to paint the small and large swings at the end of October. The top fixings also require re-greasing.
- **Toddler area** – items identified in the annual playground inspection need attention. Mr. Meischke to arrange for the work to be done by Kompan. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **MPPA** – boundary fence needs some repair.
- **Culverts on Mill Lane** – area in very poor condition.
- **War Memorial** – some broken tree debris needs removing from the War Memorial surround and garden area. Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee – War Memorial.

- **Annual playground report**

All items identified for attention in the annual play inspection, carried out by the Play Inspection Company on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015, were low or very low risk items. Mr. Meischke will instruct Kompan to attend to any items identified on the equipment they installed at the end of 2014. **Action: J. Meischke**

Mr. Meischke and Mr. Smith to look at all the other items identified in the report and carry-out any work required. **Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke**

### v) Weekly sportsfield

Nothing to report.

### vii) Website

The Clerk to pursue with the uploading of documentation to the website.

**Action: J. Allsop**

### viii) Highway and Lighting faults

Mr. Smith said that the HCC contractors have done an appalling job spraying a surface dressing on the roads in both Rectory Lane and Hockerill.

Mr. Smith said the contractors protected drain covers and curb sides with masking tape and then sprayed the road surface, the results of which are an uneven mess. This work has been funded from County Councillor Ken Crofton budget.

It was agreed to e-mail Raj Goutam notifying him of the problem and asking him to put it right. A copy of this e-mail to be sent to Councillor Ken Crofton

Mrs. Stanley said that there is an elder bush growing out of the pavement adjacent to 37 Station Road causing visibility problems. She agreed to give the exact details to the Clerk so that it can be reported to Hertfordshire Highways. **Action: M. Stanley/J. Allsop**

## 9 Correspondence received

### a) East Herts Rural Parish Conference

No Parish Councillors present at the meeting were available to attend the Rural Parish Conference on 18<sup>th</sup> September.

## 10 Village organisations

- **Watton-at-Stone School Governors**

Mr. Meischke said that he and Mr. Smith had received an e-mail from Charles Clark concerning the use of some of the HCC owned land adjacent to the new children's centre as youth football facilities. The site includes the area that had been set aside as a doctors surgery and the land beyond that going towards Church Lane. It does however still allow for a wild life reserve adjacent to Church Lane and does not affect the open space land at the back of gatekeeper meadow.

Mr. Clark is having some difficulty in getting the proposals agreed. A copy of Mr. Clark's e-mail to be forwarded to all Parish Councillors.

**Action: J. Allsop**

## 11 Items for Parish News

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

- Co-option of a new Parish Councillor

**Action: I. Knight**

- Bus services – use it or lose it

**Action: I. Knight**

- Traffic problems in Station Road and the High Street

**Action: D. Stock**

- Reminder about 2015 New Homes Bonus funding

**Action: J. Allsop**

### 7 a) Parish Councillor Vacancy applications

To date three applications have been received to fill the Parish Council Vacancy. The deadline date for applications is Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September.

The Parish Council agreed to vote for one of the three applicants by completing a voting slip. Each candidate to receive a score with 1<sup>st</sup> choice receiving 3 points, 2<sup>nd</sup> choice 2 points and 3<sup>rd</sup> choice 1 point. If no further applications are received between 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, the vote taken tonight will stand. If however more applications are received between 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> September, then a special meeting of the Parish Council will be arranged to co-opt a member.

All Parish Councillors were e-mailed copies of the applications from the following applicants.

- Mrs. Catherine Hammon
- Ms. Amber Thomas
- Mr. Alan Rattue

After discussion, Parish Councillors completed voting slips and Mrs. Hammon received the highest point score. Mrs. McCash e-mailed her voting preferences to the Clerk and Mr. Smith prior to the meeting and these were included in the results.

**Note:** No further applications were received between 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> September and Mrs. Hammon was duly co-opted as a Parish Councillors.

Mr. Smith to write to all three applicants.

**Action: M. Smith**

- **Car parking in School Lane**

Mr. Smith said that he wrote to Mr. Abel Smith to ask him if he could provide any additional car parking in School Lane to help with both the Community Hall, school Lane and High Street usage.

Mr. Abel Smith replied on 3<sup>rd</sup> September, stating that the Abel Smith Estate are soon to have a Trustees meeting and he would place this matter on the agenda and get back to the Parish Council in early October.

**The meeting closed at 2145.**

**The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015.**