

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 16th February 2016

Present:

Mr. Michael Smith (Chairman)	Mr. John Meischke
Mrs. Christine Dinnin	Mr. Denis Filer
Mr. Ian Knight	Mrs. Helen McCash
Mrs. Margaret Stanley	Mr. David Stock
Mrs. Jane Allsop (Clerk)	

Members of public: District Councillor: Mr. Mike Freeman (until 2045)

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence: Mrs. Catherine Hammon and Dr. Emma Waltham.

2 Public Participation

None

3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

None.

• Police report

Mrs. McCash said that Sergeant Duncan Wallace had emailed the Clerk his apologies for not being able to attend tonight's meeting and attached the February Police report for Watton-at-Stone, which included statistics for crimes, antisocial behaviour and parking issues. Mrs. McCash then read out the report. The Clerk to e-mail a copy to all Parish Councillors.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Freeman said that Commissioner David Lloyd has £1.25 million of funding available to improve road safety. He asked Parish Councillors if they could come up with some ideas that could take advantage of this funding pot. The suggestions put forward by Parish Councillors were, a raised platform to slow High Street traffic at the northern end of the village near the commercial area; village gateways; speeding signs. It was agreed that all Parish Councillors should e-mail each other their ideas. If an appropriate idea is agreed, Mr. Smith to apply to the Commissioner for funding on behalf of Watton-at-Stone.

Action: Parish Councillors/ M. Smith.

Mr. Freeman said that the government are considering banning pavement and kerb parking. However, this would not be practical in some areas where the roads are so narrow that if a car is parked on the roadside a vehicle would not have enough room to pass. In addition, the scheme would need to be wardened. Hertfordshire County Council is unlikely to do this and the police do not have enough manpower. However, East Herts Council may be willing to give it a go in selected areas.

Mr. Stock said that the Hazeldell's on-pavement parking is getting worse and could soon become a verge parking issue. There is a new parking problem occurring because builders are using skips on their home driveways as a means of disposing of building waste rather than taking the rubbish direct to the dump. When a skip is full, they have it replaced with an empty one, meaning that there is a skip permanently on site and usually blocking both the driveway and access to a garage. This in turn means that the homeowner has to park their vehicles on the roadside. Mr. Freeman agreed to see if there is anything that could be done to stop the practice.

Action: M. Freeman

4 Declaration of Interests

None

5 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 19th January 2016**
Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved.

b) Review of actions

1. **Obtain estimates for both the repair and replacement of the Community Hall roof (West-side)**
Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall Trustees – Repair to roof.

2. **Arrange for the two new signs to be put up at the MPPA:** completed.

3. **Monitor the state of the hedge at 37 Station Road**

Mrs. Dinnin confirmed that the hedge at 37 Station Road had not been cut back.

Mr. Freeman offered to cut back the hedge himself. Parish Councillors encouraged him not to do this.

The Clerk to log the overgrown hedge with Highways faults.

Action: J. Allsop

4. **Look at the 15-year estimated long-term capital expenditure plan:** outstanding.

Action: M. Stanley/J. Allsop

5. **Complete 9-month inspection of accounts**
Refer to item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee - 9-month inspection of accounts
6. **Investigate standing water on sportsfield near drain cover**
Mr. Meischke said that he had investigated the standing water on the sportsfield, which was no longer evident. He said that the standing water probably only occurs during very wet weather.
7. **Inspect Toddler Spica re splattering on paintwork**
Mr. Meischke said he removed the splattering on the Toddler Spica paintwork.
The Clerk to chase Kompan about the repair work identified in the annual playground inspection.

Action: J. Allsop

c) Action points resolved

1. E-mail all Parish Councillors the decision notice for Gregory's Farm
2. Contact Mr. Stutley, HCC re High Street and Station Road traffic schemes
3. Modify document of 'Good' and 'Not so good' aspects of the village
4. Update village directory and e-mail modified document to all Parish Councillors for their comments
5. Return completed precept form to East Herts Council
6. Modify the 'Friends of the Community Hall' article
7. Include 'Friends of the Community Hall' article in the Parish News
8. Display 'Friends of the Community Hall' article on the website and notice boards
9. Include 'Friends of the Community Hall' article on the new Facebook page
10. Investigate further the installation of a galvanised steel roof
Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall Trustees – Repair to roof.
11. Obtain prices for Gas and electricity contracts in early March 2016
12. Arrange for shrub in War Memorial garden to be staked
13. Remove the poppy wreaths from around the base of the War Memorial
14. Complete Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests
15. Ask Fred Burnell to look at mole hills around the play area on the sportsfield
16. Ask Ted Brown to cut back the gap in the sportsfield hedge onto Church Walk
17. Inspect Community Hall roof on the changing room side
18. Contact East Herts Council re rusting litterbin in Mill Lane
19. Set up Facebook page
20. Send donation to River Beane Restoration Association
21. Arrange for Parish Council articles to be published in the Parish News

d) Action points outstanding

1. **Investigate matting for the goalmouths:** outstanding. **Action: N. Smith/I. Knight**
2. **Draw up an Asset Management plan**
Refer to item 5 b 4, Review of actions - Look at the 15-year estimated long-term capital expenditure plan.
3. **Liaise with Mark Blacktin re the installation of the seats and picnic table**
Mr. Smith said that he had installed the seat in the High Street opposite the George and Dragon, the one Church Walk and the tree seat on Watton Green. The seat on the Lammas still needs to be installed and the installation of the picnic table will wait until the weather warms up.

Fencing on Great Innings

Mr. Freeman said that a high fence, with spikes on the top, has been installed at the back of the multi play area on Great Innings and running along the boundaries of the properties that back onto the play area. There is also kissing gate in the fencing with electronic fob entry use only. Parish Councillors were unable to tell him who installed this fence. Mr. Freeman to investigate. **Action: M. Freeman**

6 Planning

Mrs. McCash reported on the following items.

a) Applications

- i) **Gregorys Farm, Whempstead (3/15/2397/LBC) - listed building and conservation area**
The retention of internal alterations, and proposed external alterations, in conjunction with the proposed change of use and conversion of this curtilage listed building to form an independent residential dwelling house.
Refer to item 6 a iii.

ii) Gregorys Farm, Whempstead (3/15/2396/FUL)

The retention of internal alterations, and proposed external alterations, in conjunction with the proposed change of use and conversion of this curtilage listed building to form an independent residential dwelling house.

Refer to item 6 a iii.

iii) Gregorys Farm, Whempstead (3/15/2582/FUL)

Conversion of buildings from ancillary to residential accommodation.

Mrs. McCash reminded Parish Councillors that the previous set of plans for Gregorys Farm had been rejected. She said these new plans, one of which is for 'listed building and conservation area' show slight alteration to the previous plans. She recommended that the Parish Council make a no comment response. This was agreed.

Action: J. Allsop

iv) Builders Yard, Perrywood Lane (3/16/0084/VAR)

Variation of condition 3 (approved plans) of planning permission 3/15/0719/FUL for the demolition of existing asbestos-sheeted storage buildings and replacement with two detached house with integral garages and associated landscaping works to allow repositioning and enlargement of ground floor windows in the end elevations of each house and the addition of further ground and first floor windows to the side elevations of the rear projecting elements.

The plans show some small changes to the windows aspects of the two houses that have already had planning permission granted.

Mrs. McCash e-mailed Parish Councillors the details and the Clerk was instructed to write a no comment response to East Herts Council.

b) Decisions

3 Lammas Road (3/15/2551/HH)

First floor rear extension, garage conversion and alterations and alterations to openings

- East Herts Council – granted

Mrs. McCash summarised the planning conditions for Parish Councillors.

7 Specific items

a) Traffic along Station Road

Mr. Stock continues trying to arrange the important follow-up meeting between the Parish Council and HCC so we can get details of the results of the public consultation and how the comments received (including those of the Parish Council) will affect the 'concept' scheme/proposals going forward.

The delays appear to be due to difficulties Michael Stutley is having in getting the appropriate personnel together and he has asked Mr. Stock to suggest dates and arrange the meeting accordingly. **Action: D. Stock**

(Note: Mr. Stock subsequently arranged the meeting for Thursday 25 February, at 1915 in the Community Hall.)

b) Traffic along High Street

Refer to the above item.

c) Neighbourhood Plan update

Mr. Smith said that the Neighbourhood Plan's Steering Group had held its first meeting on Tuesday 9th February.

Charles Clark assumed the Chair, although he was not officially elected during the meeting. The steering group members all have strong attributes to bring to the group. However, it was the four youngest members, who are of similar ages, who dominated the meeting. They are Duncan Cox, Mehron Kirk and Parish Councillors Catherine Hammon and Emma Waltham. The other two members of the steering group are Debra Freeman and David Humby.

Mr. Smith said that Mrs. Hammon had made an excellent analysis of the situation concerning brownfield sites in the village.

Mr. Stock has updated the 'Watton-at-Stone: Good and Not So Good' document and issued it at Edition 2. Unless there was a need to update the document further at some point, he now feels that his work on this is complete. Mr. Smith said that the document had been given to the Neighbourhood Plan steering group.

The Steering Group will hold its next meeting on 1st March in the Community Hall. They have also arranged a meeting for the Neighbourhood Planning Committee volunteers to meet at Watton School on Wednesday 9th March at 1930, so they can be updated on the progress made to date and discuss how the group as a whole can work together on the Neighbourhood Plan for Watton-at-Stone.

The Steering Group are also proposing an open day, at the Nigel Poulton Community Hall, to promote the Neighbourhood Plan.

Mr. Smith said that Parish Council and Community Hall Trustees will pursue the promotion of the use of the Nigel Poulton Community Hall and obtaining pitch facilities to get Watton-at-Stone Youth Football back in the village again. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group will be asked to include these items in the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan.

Mr. Smith said that he had asked the Clerk to contact the Diocesan Board to find out if they would allow the land leased for the additional tennis court to be used for a youth football pitch. The tennis court could then be located at the far end of the allotment land. The Diocesan board have acknowledged our request and will get back to us in due course.

Mr. Knight said that the land for the new tennis court is not big enough for a youth football pitch. Also, that it would not be in the best interest of tennis players to have their facilities split.

Mr. Smith said that it is hoped that HCC will also agree to the temporary use of their land adjacent to the school for an additional youth football pitch.

Mrs. McCash formally withdrew the Churches request for use of the allotment land as a cremation site because they have found an alternative site.

It was agreed that all allotment holders should be sent an e-mail stating that the Parish Council has not made a decision on what to do with the disused area of the allotment. However, they are considering the use of the land for sporting facilities and if this was the case, the area would be fenced off and the only access to the site would be from Church Walk.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Smith said that he and Mr. Freeman would be liaising with East Herts Council to get the Mill Lane site developed for housing. Because of its close proximity to the River Beane, luxury flats might be an option with garaging below.

If planning permission were granted at Gregory's Farm, the three units would go towards our housing allocation for the village.

d) Parish Maps

Mr. Smith said that he had found a good source of online mapping, which he had used on a one-month free trial. The annual charge for this service is £120 per annum. Mr. Smith said that the Parish Council should be able to obtain all the maps they need for the Neighbourhood Plan from East Herts Council, with the help of District Councillor Mike Freeman.

e) List good and bad things within the parish and e-mail to all Parish Councillors

Refer to item 7 c, Specific items – Neighbourhood plan.

f) Village Directory

The Clerk sent all Parish Councillors the revised Village Directory showing the modifications she had made in red text. It was agreed that Clerk update the Village Directory again and e-mail the modified version to all Parish Councillors for their comments.

Action: J. Allsop/Parish Councillors

g) Parish Council land

The Parish Council agreed the land it owns at Rivershill has no practical use as it is landlocked and they should dispose of this asset in accordance with government guidelines.

These guidelines are in accordance with the Local Government act 1972, General Disposal Consent

It was agreed in the first instance, to offer the land for sale to the owners of the adjoining properties, namely: 48, 50 and 52 Rivershill. If none of them submit an offer, the land to be advertised openly.

Mr. Smith to write to the owners of 48, 50 and 52 Rivershill inviting them to submit competitive tenders for the Parish Council owned land adjacent to their properties.

Action: M. Smith

This item to remain on the agenda.

Agenda: 03/1

• Dogs - Microchipping and dog waste posters

Mr. Freeman said that from 6th April 2016 the law will state that all dogs must be micro chipped. East Herts Council are carrying-out free micro chipping on 6 dates at different locations throughout East Herts.

Copies of an East Herts Council poster to be put up on the Parish Council notices boards. **Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Freeman said it is an offence to walk a dog without carrying a bag or container to dispose of dog waste.

It was suggested that additional dog waste bins are required near the school. Mr. Freeman to ask East Herts Council to survey the village to identify locations for additional dog waste bins.

Action: M. Freeman

8 Sub-Committees

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	
Allotment rent	<u>15.75</u>	HCC – 10 reams of copy paper	<u>19.08</u>
	<u>15.75</u>		<u>19.08</u>
Cheques issued			
Wages and salaries			1146.21
Methodist church		NHB 2015 - Grant	621.68
War Memorial Hall		NHB 2015 - Grant	<u>2,640.00</u>
			<u>4,407.89</u>
Cheques received			
Allotment holder		Allotment rent	<u>15.75</u>
			<u>15.75</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
Floodlighting donations	260.00	Items for Library shelves:	
Carla Beach – Pavilion	126.00	Homebase – 1 shelf unit (ref 12.2015)	35.44
Phillip Little - Main Hall	48.00	Wickes – jigsaw & tape	10.98
Karla Hall – Main Hall & Pavilion	52.00	Wickes – sealant & brackets	16.88
Vince Geoff – Main Hall	12.00	B & Q – bolts	16.35
Sarah Mayberry – Main Hall & Pavilion	64.00	HCC – cleaning materials	<u>37.92</u>
Simon Hargood – Main Hall & Pavilion	40.00		<u>117.57</u>
Alice Willet – Main Hall & Pavilion	39.00		
Paula Cross – Main Hall & Pavilion	39.00		
Paula Cross - donations	<u>1.00</u>		
	<u>681.00</u>		
Cheques issued			
Wages	February 2016		159.00
Total Contract Cleaners	Hall cleaning in January 2016		<u>120.00</u>
			<u>279.00</u>
Cheques received			
Badminton Club	Main Hall and Pavilion		162.00
Mr & Mrs Hill	Main Hall		169.65
Conservative Association	Main Hall		24.00
Lisa Rigby	Main Hall and Pavilion		<u>58.50</u>
			<u>414.15</u>

Parish Councillors agreed the payments.

- **9-monthly inspection of accounts**

Mrs. McCash said that she carried out the 9-month inspection of the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts and they were in good order.

She has given the Clerk a signed copy of her report to be included in the Community Hall and Parish Council accounts for 2015/16.

- **Parish Council and Community Hall Insurance policies**

Mr. Filer said that the Clerk has started the process of obtaining quotations to combine the Parish Council and Community Hall insurance policies.

- **Future of New Homes Bonus and S106 funding**

Mr. Freeman advised that East Herts Council are currently investigating whether to introduce the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to large development schemes in its area. It can offer significant advantages (e.g. CIL revenue can be spent as Town/Parish Councils decide rather than being tied to site-specific enhancements) and formally constituted Parish Councils with a Neighbourhood Plan in place can receive 25% of the CIL from any one scheme with no financial limit. But there are cases where the CIL receipt would have been less than the revenue received under existing S106 provisions, and CIL does not operate for the affordable homes element of any development. Mr. Freeman agreed to keep the Parish Council advised on this subject.

Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Meischke reported on the following items.

- **Action plan/Friends of Community Hall and survey**

Mr. Stock has made some changes to the presentation of the flier 'Would you like to help to broaden the use of The Nigel Poulton Community Hall' so that it can be (and now has been) published in a consistent form in the Parish News, on Parish Council notice boards, the Watton-at-Stone website and the Parish Council Facebook page.

Prior to this, six volunteers have come forward.

Mr. Stock and Mr. Meischke have been working together to produce an appropriate Survey document. Nigel Farren, (Project Co-Ordinator, Forever Active) has agreed to pay for the printing and distribution of the Survey via the Parish News. Additional copies will be made available at locations within the village. The survey is aimed at activities for the over 50s, to keep them healthy.

Also, a copy of the Survey is to be put on the Watton-at-Stone website and a link to the website is to be posted on the Parish Council's Facebook.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Repair to roof**

Mr. Smith obtained an additional quotation (which is in excess of £25,000) for replacing the roof on the Pavilion-side of the building. Mr. Meischke said that although he had left numerous messages with City Roofing UK Contractors, they had not submitted a quotation to repair or replace the Pavilion roof.

Parish Councillors agreed that the best option was to accept P J. Andrews' quotation to supply and fit a plastic-coated galvanised steel roof at a cost of £5,700 plus VAT.

Mr. Smith to contact P. J. Andrews accordingly.

Action: M. Smith

Mr. Meischke said a two-foot section of capping on the low-level roof on the car-park side of the Community Hall is missing. The roofing contractors to be asked if they can repair this when they are on site replacing the Pavilion roof.

Action: M. Smith

- **Replacement boiler/Water Meter**

Mr. Meischke said that the water meter flow recorder had stopped working again.

- **Internet connection progress report**

Dr. Norden has been trying to get residents of School Lane, Old School Orchard and Glebe Court interested in having a Virgin Media fast internet connection. To drive this forward, Mr. Meischke said a meeting has been arranged between residents and East Herts Council on 1st March 2016 at the Community Hall.

Mr. Meischke noted that there is a fully-wired BT box in the meeting room. He asked the Clerk if she had any further details about the box; she did not know of its existence.

- **Arrival of 22 new child chairs and two tables**

The seats, that Parish Councillors agreed to pay for from the New Homes Bonus funds, have arrived as well as two child-height tables.

- **Library**

The Library is now fully operational and is bigger and better than Mr. Freeman thought possible. He expressed his gratitude to all those who had donated books and the incredible effort put in by some of the volunteers.

Mr. Freeman has agreed that the Schools collection of Children's Library books will be included with those at the Library. The Library will need to be opened after school finishes so as to allow the children access.

- **Internal store cupboard**

Mark Blacktin will be installing the additional shelving in the internal cupboard tomorrow.

Mr. Freeman left the meeting.

Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **MPPA**
Mr. Knight said one of the floodlighting bulbs, closet to the cricket field, had broken. He said he would look at having it replaced in April when the ground is drier. **Agenda: 04/16**
- **Sportsfield**
Mr. Smith organised Frank Cooper and Son to cut the sportsfield grass with a ride-on mower because it was unseasonably long for this time of year. Mr. Knight said it was a very good cut and was a one-off cost of £70 plus VAT.

Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Allotments**
Refer to item 7 c, Specific items - Neighbourhood Plan update.
- **Dam on the River Beane**
Mrs. Dinnin said that the Clerk noticed a mysterious blue and yellow dam across the River Beane about 100 yards downstream from the bridge on Walkern Road. Mrs. Dinnin said that after investigating, Colin Street (Environment Agency) told her that an insurance company had got a private contractor to erect the dam to soak up an oil leak. The Environment Agency have made a site visit and will monitor the situation.
Mrs. Dinnin to monitor the situation. **Action: C. Dinnin**
- **Village pump**
It was noted that complaints had been received concerning tall grass around the village pump. However cutting it would have destroyed the emerging daffodil flowers. This area is not a Parish Council responsibility.

New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee

Mrs. Stanley reported on the following.

- **Letter from Pam Filer –War Memorial Hall Committee**
Mrs. Stanley read out a letter from Pam Filer (War Memorial Hall) thanking the Parish Council for their New Homes bonus grant which enabled new flooring to be installed in the kitchen, toilet and back meeting room areas. Mrs. McCash said that the work done has greatly improved the War Memorial Hall facilities. She said that it had also highlighted an unknown damp problem, which has now been addressed.
After an incident concerning the storage of tables at the Memorial Hall, the Clerk said that she had been approached by Peter Doolan who wanted to know how much the Community Hall had paid for their wheeled table trolley, because the War Memorial Hall were considering buying one. The Clerk emailed him the details including the sellers' website address.

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 that he had already taken the meter readings and will e-mail these to the Clerk. **Action: J. Meischke**
- iii) **Fire Inspection**
Nothing adverse to report.
- iv) **Monthly village-report**
Mrs. McCash completed the report on 14th and 16th February 2016.
Only the adverse items highlighted in the monthly village-report are minuted here.
Large swings – a lot of wear on the safety surface.
Mr. Meischke and Mr. Smith to inspect. **Action: J. Meischke/M. Smith**
Double bike ramp – graffiti
Mr. Meischke and Mr. Smith to inspect. **Action: J. Meischke/M. Smith**
Mill Lane bin – overflowing and bottom of bin falling out because of rust. The Clerk has reported this to East Herts Council and agreed to chase sending them a photograph of the bin. **Action: J. Allsop**
MPPA - path needs cutting back. Adam Welch to be asked to cut this back. **Action: C. Dinnin**

vi) **Weekly sportsfield**

Nothing to report.

vii) **Website.**

Mr. Smith read out Dr. Waltham's report on progressing a new website in place of the current one at www.watton-pc.org.uk. The Clerk to e-mail the report to all Parish Councillors.

Action: J. Allsop

viii) **Facebook**

Mr. Smith reported that Dr. Waltham has set up a Facebook page.

Items posted on the site so far have been:

- Requests for 'Friends of the Nigel Poulton Community Hall'
- Installation of the River Beane relief pipeline update
- Update on the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan
- Opening of the village library

ix) **Highway and Lighting faults**

None.

9 Correspondence received

None

10 Village organisations

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

Mr. Stock is to attend the next War Memorial Hall Management Committee meeting which is to be held on 2nd March.

11 Items for Parish News

The following items were identified for inclusion in either the March 2016 issues of the Parish News.

- The Nigel Poulton Community Hall – Trustees survey.

Action: I. Knight

The following items were identified for inclusion in either the April 2016 issues of the Parish News.

- Installation of Replacement seats with recycled plastic ones.

Action: M. Smith/J. Allsop

The meeting closed at 2102

The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 15th March 2016.