

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 17th May 2016 directly after the Annual meeting of the Parish Council

Present:	Mr. Michael Smith (Chairman)	Mrs. Christine Dinnin
	Mr. Denis Filer	Mrs. Catherine Hammon
	Mr. Ian Knight	Mrs. Margaret Stanley (after 1941)
	Dr. Emma Waltham	Mrs. Jane Allsop (Clerk)

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence: Mr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman), Mrs. Helen McCash and Mr. David Stock.

2 Public Participation

Police report by Sergeant Duncan Wallace

Prior to the start of this meeting, Sergeant Duncan Wallace gave his monthly police report to Parish Councillors.

There were twenty-one recorded crimes showing for Watton-at-Stone since Sergeant Duncan Wallace last report to the Parish Council on 19th April. However, four out of the twenty-one crimes relate to a by-pass incident and another five relate to fly tipping, which include areas in Hooks Cross and Aston.

There have been no burglaries to dwellings; however, there have been two thefts from sheds.

Fly tipping is increasing across East Herts and the county as a whole. A separate police unit has been set up to tackle the problem. Mr. Smith said that he reported two incidents of fly-tipping today. One in Mill Lane and one on the way to investigate and Whempstead.

Sergeant Wallace said that most of the fly-tipping incidents seem to be related to garden clearances in the Stevenage area.

Sergeant Wallace was pleased at the re-election of Mr. Lloyd as the Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire as his policing policies for rural Hertfordshire will remain.

District Councillor Michael Freeman asked Sergeant Wallace if he could provide some traffic cones to stop people parking in Station Road. However, the police are no longer responsible for issuing cones and this is the responsibility of Highways.

Mr. Smith said that the village are experience an increase in parked cars blocking footpaths. He said that District Councillor Freeman is looking into East Herts Council helping with this problem in certain areas of the village. .

Sergeant Duncan said a car is obstructing a footpath if a wheelchair or double buggy cannot pass. However, only police officers can ticket cars or enforce drivers to move their vehicles. The ticketing of cars in Station Road is still on-going but has little or no effect on the attitude of drivers who park in this area.

Mr. Smith made Sergeant Wallace aware of an accident that occurred on Friday 13th May, to which the police attended. The Clerk agreed to send Sergeant Wallace the two e-mails she had received concerning the incident, both of which included attached photographs of the accident.

Action: J. Allsop

3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

None.

4 Declaration of Interests

Mr. Filer declared a personal interest in item 6 a ii, Planning applications - Land Adjacent To The Moat House Perrywood Lane (in so much as his daughter owns a small portion of the land involved).

5 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

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

b) Review of actions

1. Investigate water pressure at the far end of the allotments

Following Mrs. McCash's report that the pressure at the far end of the allotments was very low, Mr. Smith checked the stopcock to the allotments water supply and it is fully turned on. He also checked the water meter and there does not appear to be a water leak in the system.

2. Inspect the goalmouth areas and decide on what action is required

Mr. Smith has re-seeded the goalmouths areas and added some swell-gel granules to the soil to help water retention to enable the grass seed to germinate. He said that Blue Bury Contractors would be submitting an invoice for approximately £180.

Action: M. Smith

3. Meet with members of the Allotment and Garden Association

Mr. Smith and Mrs. Dinnin will be meeting with members of the Allotment and Garden Association on Wednesday 18th May.

4. Contact all existing ferreting license holders

The Clerk reported that she had spoken to both Bob Adams and Roger Bridges and issued the following ferreting licenses.

Bob Adams: The Lammas and the paddock at the far end of the Lammas.

Roger Bridges: The Allotments, the Lammas, Watton Green and the Cottage site.

The Clerk said she would chase Bob Adams and Roger Bridges for signed copies of the licences if these were not returned in the next three weeks.

Action: J. Allsop

c) Action points resolved

1. Arrange for Jim Morrissey to carry-out the 2015/16 internal audit of the Parish Council accounts
2. Arrange for McCash and Hay to carry-out the 2015/16 audit of the Community Hall accounts
3. Write to planning department re Gregory’s Farm
4. Submit an application for the funding of new tables and chairs
5. Draft wording for commemorative plaque and e-mail to all Parish Councillors for their comments
6. Contact Steam Dreams re Flying Scotsman schedule
7. Renew license across Cottage site
8. Produce summarized 12-monthly statement of accounts for the Parish Council and Community Hall
9. Amend document titled ‘Risk Assessment and Financial Management’
10. Review Community Hall survey forms and e-mail findings to all Trustees
11. Arrange a meeting between the Trustees and the Friends of the Nigel Poulton Community Hal
12. Arrange meeting between the Trustees and Nigel Farren, (Project Co-Ordinator, Forever Active)
13. Unroll the exhibition carpeting and cut it as required
14. Notify all block booking hirers of the increase in hiring costs and reduced discount rate
15. Alter the hiring charges on the Watton-at-Stone website
16. Monitor the floodlighting bulbs on a month-by-month basis
17. Arrange for Bluebury Contractors to clear the debris from the Millpond and repair the fence rail
18. Ask Ted Brown to clean Harry’s seat
19. Inspect damaged notice board at Community Hall and take action as required
20. Ask for keys back to outside toilets
21. Complete 6-monthly check
22. **Put up a link for both the agenda and minutes on the Parish Council Facebook page each month**
The Clerk apologised that she had not put the May agendas on Facebook.
23. Chase County Councillor Crofton re white-lining at the High Street junction with Walkern Road

6 Planning

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

a) Applications

i) 68 Rivershill (3/16/0946/HH)

Proposed rear extension

Dr. Waltham said she visited the neighbours and they had had no objections to the application. However, one of the neighbours said she would be looking at the plans online and if she had any objections she would write to the planning department.

After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed that the Clerk be instructed to send a ‘No comment’ response to the planning department.

Action: J. Allsop

ii) Land Adjacent To The Moat House Perrywood Lane (3/16/0947/HH)

Construction of three detached dwellings with garages

Mr. Smith said that he had looked at this application for three new dwellings, which, if granted, would bring a total of five new dwellings in this area. He said that the only concern he could see is that the Right of Way across this land may become obstructed.

After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed that the Clerk be instructed to write to the planning department stating that the Parish Council’s only comment is that they do not want to see the Right OF Way across this land obstructed.

Action: J. Allsop

iii) 17 High Street (3/16/0986/HH)

Single and two-storey rear extension replacing existing rear conservatory and part single storey accommodation located beneath the rear cat-slide roof.

Mr. Knight said he was actioned to look at this application but had not done so yet. Mr. Smith agreed to visit the neighbours at numbers 15 and 19 High Street and report back to Parish Councillors with his findings.

Action: M. Smith

7 Specific items

a) District Councillor Michael Freeman's Report

The Clerk read out District Councillor Freeman's e-mail report dated 13th May.

'I'm afraid I will not be able to attend this meeting.

I've very little report this time apart from the good news that the white lines at High Street/Walkern Road have been done and, as Denis will be aware, Network Rail are carrying out some substantial repairs to the fencing at the Perrywood Lane bridge across the railway. HCC have also re-acted very swiftly to our reports of potholes in Church Lane, which have now all been repaired.

Mr. Smith and I are meeting the Neighbourhood Plan group on Saturday and I am sure he will update the Parish Council separately.'

b) Traffic along Station Road

Mr. Smith read out Mr. Stock's e-mail report dated 13th May.

'We still await to hear from HCC re the results of their review of the plans to resolve the traffic and pedestrian-safety issues in Station Road. I will take an action point to contact Harrison Eales at HCC to get an update on progress and the current forecast-dates for when we can expect some action.

The serious problems in this area continue and are getting worse. Today (13 May) a resident provided us with copies of 3 photographs he took of a 2-car collision, which the police attended, in Station Road adjacent to the Gatekeeper Meadow development. I asked Jane to send a copy of these to Harrison Eales. This she did together with a copy of the residents e-mail. I remain convinced that any plans to incorporate lay-bys on this stretch of road will not be helpful; as we have all pointed out quite forcibly to HCC and our County Councillor on a number of occasions.'

The Clerk read out the following e-mail, dated 16th May, from Nick Sidhu (Principal Engineer, Integrated Transport Projects and Safety, Highways).

'We are close to finalising our proposal for Station Road and High Street, and the recent incident highlights the urgency. When this is agreed with our Sponsor we will meet the Parish Council and Member on site to finalise the solution.'

c) Traffic along High Street

As reported at their April meeting, the Parish Council is waiting for Highways to come back to us regarding Harrison Eales' findings and a possible solution to the traffic congestion problems.

d) Neighbourhood Plan – progress report

Mrs. Hammon and Dr Waltham reported that the Neighbourhood Plan consultation phase commenced on 23rd April with an event at the Nigel Poulton Community Hall. This was well attended by around 150 villagers, both familiar faces, newer arrivals to the area and people who had not previously been involved in village development issues. Many people were expecting to be given options to choose from rather than actually coming forward with ideas for themselves, so the approach of the Neighbourhood Plan was explained and it may be that stronger views are expressed in subsequent stages of consultation.

Neighbourhood Plan volunteers are now in the process of continuing the consultation on the basis of the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire, which includes the following questions as well as other personal details.

1. Local amenities – what is good, what is missing, what needs improving.
2. Traffic and parking – concerns and suggested improvements.
3. Future developments – which potential areas (*refer to plan overleaf*).
4. Character and image – what makes our village special.

In addition, there is an 'Any other comments' section.

Instead of posting the questionnaires through doors, the volunteers are being encouraged to actually hand the questionnaires to residents and either help them to complete the form or collect it at a later date. They can also return their completed questionnaires to several locations throughout the village.

Mrs. Hammon said that the Steering Group met on Saturday 14th May with District Councillor Freeman and Mr. Smith, who reported on the latest East Herts Council Village Hierarchy meeting they had recently attended. There is a suggestion that Group 2 and 3 villages might take some of the burden of additional housing in East Herts and lessen the impact on Group 1 villages such as Watton-at-Stone. EHDC is considering abandoning all formal village boundaries, with each planning application in rural areas being assessed on its own merit and by reference to sustainability issues (although this would not apply to Watton-at-Stone because the Green Belt surrounds all of its boundaries).

No decision has been made on this issue, so until we know to the contrary, the Steering Group will continue to base their Neighbourhood Plan for Watton-at-Stone on the assumption that provision for 92 additional properties will need to be made within the parish.

Mrs. Hammon reported that the East Herts Council is expected to issue the final draft of their District Plan for consultation by September 2016. The Parish Council can comment on the changes to the District Plan as part of the consultation. All comments will be passed directly to the District Plan examiner alongside the plan, rather than being directly incorporated into the document by EHDC.

- Mrs. Stanley arrived at the meeting

Dr. Waltham said that the Steering Group will be contacting all local land owners, as well as arranging a meeting to discuss the Neighbourhood Plan with local businesses.

- **Report**

The Parish Council is to have a 4-page insert in the Parish News in June. Three of these pages are taken up with the Parish report, Trustees report and the summarised 12-monthly statement of accounts for the year ended 31st March 2016.

Mr. Smith has compiled a report for the fourth page updating the electorate on both the Neighbourhood Plan and the Station Road and High Street parking problems. He read out these reports to Parish Councillors.

Mrs. Hammond agreed to add some contact details to the Neighbourhood Plan section of the report as well as its Logo. **Action: C. Hammon**

The Clerk to e-mail the 4-page inserts to Mr. Knight for inclusion in the Parish News. **Action: J. Allsop**

e) Parish Council land

At its February Parish Council meeting, the Parish Council agreed to offer their land at Rivershill for sale to the owners of the adjoining properties, namely 48, 50 and 52 Rivershill. If none of them submitted an offer, the land would be advertised openly for sale.

On 13th April 2016, Mr. and Mrs. Taylor, 48 Rivershill wrote offering the sum of £25,000 to purchase this land. The Parish Council accepted this offer and Mr. Smith was pleased to advise the Parish Council that these funds have now been transferred into the Parish Council's current account. The Parish Council will need to pay Longmores solicitors fees for arranging this transaction and the Clerk was authorised to make this payment. **Action: J. Allsop**

f) Sir Nigel Gresley day

Mr. Smith said that the Blue Plaque, to commemorate Sir Nigel Gresley, has been ordered at a cost of £159 including delivery. He said that he had spoken to David, the ticket officer at Watton-at-Stone, who agreed to get his manager to phone Mr. Smith regarding the erection of the plaque at the station. However, to date Mr. Smith has not been contacted, but David has assured him that it would not be a problem to erect this sign.

Mr. Smith said that without knowing if the Flying Scotsman will actually pass through Watton-at-Stone station during May, we might have to rethink the Sir Nigel Gresley day. The school have already organised a competition for pupils, the winners of whom would be invited to attend the Sir Nigel Gresley event.

Notice Boards

The Clerk said that Mr. Freeman had asked if the Parish Council had considered putting up a notice board at the Station. Mr. Smith reminded Parish Councillors that we had requested permission from HCC to erect a notice board in the grass verge opposite Clappers Lane. However, although HCC agreed to the installation they insisted they would need to survey the site and install the notice board, which was a very costly option.

The Clerk said that she believed that the land at the entrance of Moorymead Close was not in HCC ownership and suggested that a notice board could be sited on this land. The Clerk to investigate who owns this land. **Action: J. Allsop**

g) Alteration of the July 2016 and September 2016 Parish Council meeting dates

Mr. Smith requested, by e-mail to all Parish Councillors, that the following Parish Council meeting dates be changed to allow him to attend both meetings.

- Tuesday 19th July 2016 be changed to Tuesday 12th July 2016.
- Tuesday 20th September be changed to Tuesday 27th September 2016.

All Parish Councillors present agreed this.

Mr. Knight said that it was too late to advertise these dates in the June issue of the Parish News. Denise Hodgson has taken over as editor of the Parish News and will be getting each issue to the printers a week earlier than previously, to allow all issues to be delivered before the end of each month.

Parish Councillors discussed the possibility of having a set space in each Parish News edition, which would allow the parish news editor to organise each month's edition of the Parish News before the Parish Council has submitted the content of their insert. It was agreed that the Clerk speak to Denise Hodgson to find out her views on this idea. **Action: J. Allsop**

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	
None		None	
Cheques issued			
BSWW Parish News	2 x inserts		100.00
Ted Brown	32 hours litterpick x £8.35		267.20
J. Allsop	April 2016 salary and home office allowance		868.81
Ted Brown			100.00
J. Allsop - The Metal Foundry	Bespoke 'Blue Plaque' Sir Nigel Gresley		159.00
Frank Cooper and Son	Grass cutting - 1 off cut in February 2016		84.00
Frank Cooper and Son	Grass cutting - 3 cuts in April 2016		212.40
Allotment and Garden Association	Allotment insurance		65.70
			<u>1857.11</u>
Cheques received			
Watton-at-Stone Community Hall	Return of NHB loan		<u>3000.00</u>
			<u>3000.00</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
Floodlighting donations 30.03.16–03.05.16	220.00	Sainsbury – Mr. Muscle cleaner	<u>1.75</u>
Carla Beach - Pavilion	127.50		<u>1.75</u>
Phillip Little - Main Hall	36.00		
Tony Silvestri - Pavilion	30.00		
Emma Waltham – Main Hall & Pavilion	39.00		
Carole Lambert	<u>21.00</u>		
	<u>473.50</u>		
Cheques issued			
BSWW Parish News	Survey insert		92.40
Rosemary Brown	21.5 hours cleaning at £8.10		174.15
John Philips	Toilet opening duties 01.01.16 to 21.04.16		112.00
Total Contract cleaners	Hall cleaning in April 2015		120.00
Watton-at-Stone Parish Council	Return of NHB loan		<u>3000.00</u>
			<u>3498.55</u>
Cheques received			
Badminton Club	Main Hall		148.50
Natalie Stichbury	Main Hall & Pavilion		<u>45.50</u>
			<u>194.00</u>

Parish Councillors agreed the payments.

- **Internal Audit for the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31st March 2016**

Mr. Filer said that Jim Morrissey had completed the internal audit of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 2015/16 and then read out the first paragraph of his audit report dated 10th May as follows.

‘As requested I have carried out my review of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31st March 2016 and can advise that all transactions have been correctly and accurately recorded. All necessary receipts and authorisations have also been produced.’

The Clerk to e-mail all Parish Councillors a copy of Mr. Morrissey’s audit report.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Filer said that Mr. Morrissey had also e-mailed as follows

‘I regret that I wish to resign from the review of the Parish Council records due to personal reasons. I hope you will be able to find a suitable replacement.

Should you not be able to by the next required review, I would of course assist you in any way I can.’

BDO wrote on 18th March informing us of the details for the annual audit for the year ending 31st March 2016. The public inspection period starts on 3rd June and ends on 14th July. The completed Annual Return and all relevant documentation needs to be sent to BDO by 6th June 2016.

Action: J. Allsop

• **Annual Return of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31st March 2016**

Mr. Filer took the Parish Council through the annual governance statement and the following questions were answered as listed below.

Section 1 – Annual governance statement	
We acknowledge as members of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including the preparation of the accounting statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the accounting statements for the year ended 31 st March 2016 that,	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	Yes
2. We have maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	Yes
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and codes of practice that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this council to conduct its business or on its finances.	Yes
4. We have provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' right in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	Yes
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this council and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	Yes
6. We have maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	Yes
7. We have taken appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	Yes
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on the council and, where appropriate have included them in the accounting statements.	Yes
9. Trust funds (including charitable) – in our capacity as the sole managing trustee we have discharged our responsibility in relation to the accountability for the fund(s)/assets	N/A

Mr. Filer proposed that the Annual governance statement detailed in section one (listed above) of the Annual Return, together with section two, the accounting statement 2015/16, be approved by the Parish Council and that the Chairman and the Clerk sign the Annual Return. Mr. Knight seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

• **McCash and Hay report on external audit of Community Hall accounts for the year ended 31st March 2016**

All Parish Councillors were e-mailed (on 16th May) a copy of the audited Community Hall accounts for the year ended 31st March 2016. Parish Councillors approved the audited Community Hall accounts and Mr. Smith signed two copies of the accounts.

The Clerk to give one signed copy of the accounts to McCash and Hay.

Action: J. Allsop

• **Financial Risk Assessment**

All Parish Councillors have been e-mailed a copy of the revised Financial Risk Assessment, which now includes two items concerning the Community Hall.

Mr. Filer said that the Financial Risk Assessment is predominantly a Parish Council document. He asked the Trustees to look at this document, with a view to adding additional Community Hall items as required.

The Clerk to pass the Financial Risk Assessment to Mr. Meischke so he can action this.

Action: J. Allsop/J. Meischke

• **Parish Council and Community Hall insurance renewals**

Mr. Filer said that in the financial year ending 31st March 2015, we spent £1990.95 on separate Parish Council and Community Hall insurance cover.

• Parish Council	Aon	£754.03
• Community Hall	Norris and Fisher	£1,236.92

Parish Councillors will remember the Mr. Filer felt that there was a lot of duplication and that we could save by combining the two policies. However, the two policies did not renew at the same time. The Community Hall renewing date was on 1st April each year and the Parish Council on 1st June. The Parish

Council therefore agreed to accept a quotation from Aon to include the Community Hall cover on the Parish Council's policy for a period of two months, at a cost of £191.19. This brought the renewal dates for the Parish Council and Community Hall in line with each other.

At Mr. Filer's request, the Clerk contacted numerous insurance companies, including Norris & Fisher, all but three declined to quote for a combined cover stating that they only dealt with village hall insurance. However, three quotations have now been obtained for a combined Parish Council and Community Hall policy.

- Came and Company – verbal quotation of a minimum of £3,000 (the Clerk informed them she did not want to pursue this further)
- Zurich £ 1,866.53 (1-year policy) £1,694.94 (3-year policy)
- Aon £709.90 (1-year policy) 5% less for 3-year policy

Mr. Filer said that the Aon quotation is less than we paid for just the Parish Council insurance cover in 2015/16.

In reading the Aon quotation, Mr. Filer could see that there was no reference to subsidence and therefore e-mailed them requesting cover and confirmation that all items listed on our asset registers were covered. Despite constantly chasing them, it took 10 days for them to reply.

They confirmed that all items on the asset register are covered and that the addition cover for subsidence would be £280 plus IPT. This equates to an additional £306.60 making the total premium £1,016.50. An additional 5% saving could be made by agreeing to a three-year policy, reducing the premium to £974.45. This is a saving of over £1,000 on the premium paid last year.

Parish Councillors agreed to take out a three-year policy with Aon.

Action: D. Filer/J. Allsop

Community Hall Trustees

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

- **Survey**

In the absence of Mr Meischke and Mr Stock, Mr Smith reported on the progress following the closing date for the Survey.

The Trustees have met with some of the Friends of the Nigel Poulton Community Hall to discuss and explain the way forward now that the results of the Survey have been reviewed. Further to this, Mr Meischke, Mr Stock, Mr Knight and Mr Smith met with Nigel Farren (who is managing "Forever Active" for East Herts Council) on 4 May to further discuss the involvement of Forever Active in some of the proposed activities and the funding-opportunities available to us. The Trustees believe that working with Forever Active, which is an initiative to promote physical activity in the community, now forms part of their strategy to improve the use of the Community Hall and it prompted the Survey, which produced considerable interest. The plan is now to concentrate on a number of the most popular areas of interest and coordinate the timing of sessions to suit as many people as possible. In the first instance, it is hoped to co-ordinate the sessions with the Library opening times so as to promote social interaction and give exposure to the activities underway.

Nigel confirmed that EHDC would be responsible for capital expenditure and fund qualified coaches for sessions. For example, they would provide a Table Tennis table(s) and an appropriately qualified coach. EHDC is also prepared to fund the advertising for activities. It is suggested that the basic charge to participate in an activity would be £2 per session and would be the Community Hall's income. This price is not fixed and could be adjusted; however entry to the first session of the chosen activities will be free.

Following on from the initial review of the Survey results, the immediate task is now to produce a matrix so that the Trustees can easily identify the interests of each named respondent and their particular preferences with regard to the timing of sessions. This will enable the Trustees to decide the best activities to proceed with at this stage and help them to plan the requirements for Coach and the 'Friends' involvement, etc.

Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop

Upon completion of the matrix, the Trustees will agree the initial activities to proceed with and then contact Nigel Farren and the appropriate respondents accordingly so that a way forward can be established.

Action: Trustees

Nigel Farren commented that this was an impressive start on the part of the Trustees.

- **Showers and boiler**

Mr. Smith said that he and Mr. Meischke are meeting with James Turner Limited on 20th May to discuss the shower and boiler systems.

- **Library**

Mr. Smith said that he or Mr. Meischke would to speak to Mr. Freeman about excess library books being left in the meeting room.

Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke

- **Exhibition carpeting for the Main Hall**

Mr. Smith said that he and Mr. Meischke had rolled out one of the reels of exhibition carpeting, cut it in two and taped the two widths together to make a 4-meter wide piece. This has now been rolled onto a large drainpipe so it can be easily stored and unrolled.

It would be difficult to store this 4-meter roll upright in the storeroom and therefore Mr. Smith suggested that the exhibition carpeting, which would be on two rolls (when the other length has been cut in two and taped) be stored at one end of the Main Hall. It was agreed to contact the two badminton groups to ask them if this would cause a problem.

Action: J. Allsop

Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **Vandalism**

Mr. Knight said that there had been two incidents of vandalism

- Tennis nets – both tennis nets have burn holes in them and will need replacing.
- A motor bike was seen driving at speed up Church Walk and around Church yard

Both these incidents have been reported to police.

- **Football posts**

Mrs. Dinnin noted that there is a set of small football posts stored behind the cricket shed. Mr. Knight said that these are 5-a-side football posts belonging to the Football Club and have been stored behind the cricket shed since the external cupboard was reduced in size. It was agreed that for safety reasons these posts should be chained together when not in use. Mr. Knight to ask the Football Club to do this.

Action: I. Knight

Mrs. Dinnin asked if it was possible for the youth of the village to use these football posts for goal practise or that the Parish Council provide a small set for use during the summer months.

It was agreed that Mr. Smith investigate the purchase of one or two portable goal posts to be located out of the way of the tennis courts and cricket pitch.

Action: M. Smith

Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Mill Pond**

Mr. Smith reported that Blue Bury Contractors had removed concrete and rubbish from the Mill Pond. The roadside fencing around Mill Pond has been repaired and the broken litterbin has been replaced with one the Parish Council litterbins stored in the Community Hall.

The Clerk to inform East Herts Council that they no longer need to replace the litterbin in Mill Lane.

Action: J. Allsop

- **P3 grant**

Mrs. Dinnin was pleased to report that the Parish Council has been successful in its bid for a £1,000 P3 grant to repair and upgrade the wooden kissing gates on Church Field, one at the High Street end and one at the entrance to the Churchyard. Also on the Church field, at the entrance to footpath 21, replace the broken wooden stile with a metal kissing gate. Mrs. Dinnin to complete the P3 paperwork and return it to Countryside Management Services.

Action: C. Dinnin

Mrs. Dinnin to contact the Diocesan board to inform them of the work to be done on their behalf.

Action: C. Dinnin/J. Allsop

New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee

Mrs. Stanley said that she had not yet met with the Football Club to give them a full explanation as to why they did not receive any funding from the 2015 New Homes Bonus grants. She agreed to send them an e-mail to clarify the situation and if required arrange to meet with them.

Action: M. Stanley

The time schedule for New Homes bonus funding applications was discussed. Concern was raised that the football teams miss out because they need their new football kit at the beginning of the season, September, and New Homes Bonus grants are not awarded until December each year.

It was agreed that Mrs. Stanley arrange a meeting of the New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee after East Herts Council have paid the New Homes Bonus funding for this year.

Action: M. Stanley

b) Routine Reports**i) Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests**

The last emergency escape lighting and manual alarm call tests were completed on Wednesday 4th May 2016 by Mr. Meischke and Mr. Stock.

Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke to arrange for Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests to be carried out on Friday 20th May.

Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke

ii) Gas and electricity meter readings

Mr. Meischke to take the meter readings and e-mail them to the Clerk.

Action: J. Meischke

iii) Fire Inspection

Nothing adverse to report. Mr. Smith signed the fire inspection report diary, which Rosemary Brown updates each week.

iv) Monthly village-report

Mr. Knight completed the report on 17th May 2016.

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

- **Goalmouths** – reseeded.
- **MPPA fencing** - as reported before, needs major attention at some stage.
- **Tennis nets** - needs replacing following vandalism by burning.
It was agreed that two new nets should be ordered.
- **Condition of allotments not under cultivation** – could be better
- **Sportsfield post and rail fencing** – cross strut on fencing in far corner needs repair.
Mr. Smith to organise repair.

Action: I. Knight/J. Allsop

Action: M. Smith

vi) 6-monthly check of MPPA, Play Area on sportsfield and Community Hall equipment

Mr. Knight has completed the 6-monthly check, with the exception of the bench inspections, which Mr. Meischke will do on his return from holiday.

Action: J. Meischke

Refer to the monthly village-report above.

vii) Weekly sportsfield

Nothing to report.

viii) Website.

The Clerk to alter the advertised meeting dates for July 2016 and September 2016.

Action: J. Allsop

viii) Facebook

Dr. Waltham and the Clerk to aim to put up new articles on the Parish Council's Facebook page each week.

Action: E. Waltham/J. Allsop

ix) Highway and Lighting faults

The hedge on the boundary of 37 Station Road with Glebe Close has still not been cut back.

The Clerk to investigate.

Action: J. Allsop

9 Correspondence received**a) East Herts Council – Annual Playground safety inspections 2016**

Ian Sharratt (Environmental Manager – Parks and Open Spaces) wrote on the 9th May advising that the annual playground inspections in East Herts are due to take place over a three-week period from 4th July. This year East Herts Council has negotiated the same price as last year, £41.50 plus VAT, for the inspections, which includes an equipment risk assessment and a pdf copy of the report.

Parish Councillors agreed that East Herts Council should be instructed to do the annual play playground inspection.

Action: J. Allsop

b) HCC – Parish lighting

All Parish Councillors present at the meeting were given a copy of an e-mail, dated 11th May, from Mick Leech (Asset Management & Maintenance Strategies Group, Highways & Operations & Strategy Unit, HCC) and attached spreadsheet. The e-mail reads as follows.

‘The attached spreadsheet shows the results of the survey carried out last week in your parish.

The prices supplied are all subject to the required testing being carried out and passing the appropriate test the cost if everything passes the required test is Approx. £11,890, if they fail then the potential cost could be £45,540.

I suspect we will be slightly above the £11,890 as some look that they may fail the test.

May I suggest that the parish council now look at styles of light fitting if you require anything other than a standard streetlight.

The next step if the parish wish to get a more confirmed price is to instruct HCC to carry out the testing to identify exactly what passed and what failed the testing at the cost of £1040

This will then allow a fixed cost to be developed against each asset and detailed discussions can be held with the parish to establish exactly what the replacements look like, do the parish require the columns to be painted.'

Parish Councillors unanimously agreed that even at the lower prices, changing the Parish Council street lighting to LED lights was not an option that was financially viable.

The Clerk to notify Mr. Leech accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

10 Village organisations

None.

- **War Memorial**

Mrs. Dinnin commented on the beautiful deep red tulips that were donated by 'Waste Not Want Not' of Stevenage and planted by the Watton-at-Stone Scout group.

11 Items for Parish News

The following items will be included in the May 2016 issues of the Parish News as a 4-page insert.

- The Annual Parish report
- The Community Hall Trustees report
- 12-month summarised accounts for the year ended 31st March 2016
- Report on Station Road/High Street
- Report on development in Watton and our Neighbourhood Plan group

The meeting closed at 2108

The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 21st June 2016.