

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 27th September 2016

Present:	Mr. Michael Smith (Chairman)	Mrs. Christine Dinnin
	Mrs. Catherine Hammon (after 2015)	Mr. Ian Knight
	Mrs. Helen McCash	Mrs. Margaret Stanley
	Mr. David Stock	
	Mrs. Jane Allsop (Clerk)	
Public:	None.	

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence: Mr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman), Mr. Denis Filer and Dr. Emma Waltham.

2 Public Participation

None.

3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

None.

4 Declaration of Interests

None.

5 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 12th July 2016**
Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved.

b) Review of actions

1. Ask Mrs. McCash for a copy of the Major Incident Plan for Watton-at-Stone

Mrs. McCash said that the Major Incident Plan is for the police to instigate if a major event occurs. The Parish Council are not required to do anything except possibly open up the Community Hall if these facilities are needed for evacuation purposes.

Mrs. McCash said that following the death of Nigel Poulton, she became the first point of contact for the police if a major event occurs and if she is not available, Michael Smith is the second point of contact.

Mrs. McCash said she would obtain a copy of the Major Incident Plan for Watton-at-Stone.

Action: H. McCash

c) Action points resolved

1. Contact Estate Agents re ownership of land at the entrance of Moorymead Close re erection of notice board
2. Count existing dog-fouling notices in the village and notify Mr. Freeman accordingly
3. Contact the residents at 15 and 19 High Street re planning application for 17 High Street
4. Write to East Herts Council re planning application for 17 High Street
5. Write/e-mail Ken Crofton to ask him where the village stand on this drainage issue
6. Obtain estimates to upgrade outside toilets (refer to Community Hall Trustees)
7. Write to all contractors who submitted quotations for the installation of the new tennis court
8. Write to Bernie Eccles (Aston Parish Council) re development of land at Walkern Road
9. Write to Chief Executive at East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trusts re defibrillator
10. **Contact Vivien Monk-Hartley to ask her to cut back the trees that are overhanging the allotments**
This action point is outstanding. Mrs. Dinnin suggested it was more appropriate for the Clerk to write to Vivien Monk-Hartley. **Action: J. Allsop**
11. Instruct Blue Bury Contractors to cut the grass at Watton Green
12. Arrange a meeting of the New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee
13. Carry-out emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call test
14. E-mail Mr. Meischke at the end of each month to ask him to take the gas and electricity meter readings
15. Upload Forever Active advert to the Watton-at-Stone website and Facebook page
16. Report condition of surface of School Lane to Hertfordshire Highways online reporting system
17. Write articles for Parish News re Forever Active programme
18. Write articles for Parish News re awarding of Parish Council trophies
19. Write articles for Parish News re building of New Tennis Court

d) Action points outstanding

1. Inspect sportsfield post and rail and take action as required

Mr. Smith said that he would look at the post and rail fence with a view to repairing it at the same time as the fence is installed around the new tennis court.

Action: M. Smith

Mrs. McCash said that Mr. and Mrs. Wilson (Glebe House) had bought some land off the Diocesan Board and it would appear that when contractors installed new wire fencing around the land, they had pushed over the post at the top corner of the sportsfield.

2. Speak to Jill Cox re the design of a new Parish Council website

Refer to item 8 b, Routine reports – Website.

3. Ask Football Club to chain the 5-a-side posts stored behind the cricket shed

Mr. Knight said that although he had spoken again to the Football Club, he had noted in the last few days that the 5-a-side posts remain unchained. Mr. Knight to chase them again.

Action: I. Knight

4. Purchase two new tennis nets

Refer to item 8 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee - Tennis nets and tennis post winder mechanism.

6 Planning

Mrs. McCash reported on the following items.

a) Applications

i) 2 Rectory Lane (3/16/1596/PNHH)

Single storey rear extension.

Mrs. McCash said that East Herts Council decided that prior approval for this application was not required.

ii) 2 Rectory Lane (3/16/1561/HH)

Demolish existing single skin ground floor extension and construct a ground floor side/rear extension.

Mrs. McCash e-mailed (on 21st July) all Parish Councillors the correspondence for this application and suggested a 'no comment' response.

This was endorsed by the following Parish Councillors: Mr. Filer, Mrs. Hammon and Mr. Knight. The Clerk wrote to East Herts Council accordingly.

iii) The Moat House, Perrywood Lane (3/16/1558/VAR)

Variation of condition 3 (Approved plans) of planning permission 3/15/0719/FUL "Demolition of existing asbestos -sheeted storage buildings and replacement with two detached houses with integral garages and associated landscaping works ".

Mrs. McCash said that this application was for a minor alterations to a granted application. The Parish Council did not comment on this application and planning permission has subsequently been granted.

iv) Lane Croft, Perrywood Lane (3/16/1768/PNHH)

Single storey rear extension

Mrs. McCash said that although the Parish Council agreed a no comment response via e-mail, East Herts Council decided that prior approval was not required for this application.

v) Gregorys Farm, Dane End (3/16/1624/FUL)

Conversion and change of use of Barn 3 to residential use and conversion of Barn 2 to residential use in association with Barn 3 including the erection of a glazed link between Barns 2 and 3

Refer to the item below.

vi) Gregorys Farm, Dane End (3/16/1782/LBC) – listed building and conservation area

Conversion and change of use of Barn 3 to residential use and conversion of Barn 2 to residential use in association with Barn 3 including the erection of a glazed link between Barns 2 and 3

Mrs. McCash e-mailed (on 11th August) all Parish Councillors the correspondence for this application and suggested a 'no comment' response.

This was agreed by the following Parish Councillors: Mrs. Hammon, Mr. Knight and Mrs. Stanley and the Clerk wrote to East Herts Council accordingly.

vii) Windrush, Whempstead Road, Whempstead (3/16/2006/HH)

Raising existing garage roof by 1.45m to create home office, music room and secure garden store for the property with external changes

Mrs. McCash said that this application is a slight amendment to a granted application. Parish Councillors discussed the application and agreed a 'no comment' response.

The Clerk to write to East Herts Council accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

viii) Land Adjacent to the Moat House, Perrywood Lane (3/16/2005/FUL)

Construct two detached dwellings

The previous application for this site was for three dwelling and was refused by East Herts Council on 24th June. Parish Councillors discussed the application and agreed a 'no comment' response.

The Clerk to write to East Herts Council accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

Mrs. McCash said that the following application had been received after the Parish Council agenda was published.

- **14 Glebe Close (3/16/2098/HH)**

Proposed single storey flat roof extensions

Mrs. McCash agreed to visit the neighbours and then e-mail her recommendations to all Parish Councillors.

Action: H. McCash

b) Decisions

i) Land adjacent to 8 and 10 School Lane (3/16/1227/FUL)

Two storey dwelling with attached garage

- East Herts Council – granted

ii) Cannon House, 69-71 High Street (3/16/1288/LBC)

Replacement of two wooden bay windows to the front of the property

- East Herts Council – refused

iii) Gregorys Farm, Dane End (3/16/1314/FUL)

The proposed change of use and alterations of this curtilage listed building to form an independent residential dwelling house, including accommodation within the roof

- East Herts Council – granted

iv) Gregorys Farm, Dane End (3/16/1315/LBC) – Listed building and conservation area

Alterations including accommodation within the roof, in conjunction with the proposed change of use of this curtilage listed building to form an independent residential dwelling house

- East Herts Council – granted

v) 2 Rectory Lane (3/16/1596/PNHH)

Single storey rear extension.

- East Herts Council – Prior approval not required

vi) Windrush, Whempstead Road, Whempstead (3/16/1377/HH)

Raising of garage roof to create home office, music room and secure garden store for the property with external changes

- East Herts Council – granted

vii) Gregorys Farm, Dane End (3/16/1359/FUL)

Conversion of buildings from ancillary to form 2 no. Work/Live Units

- East Herts Council – refused

viii) 17 High Street (3/16/1479/HH)

Single and two storey rear extension. Replacing existing rear conservatory and part single storey accommodation

- East Herts Council – granted

ix) The Moat House, Perrywood Lane (3/16/1558/VAR)

Variation of condition 3 (Approved plans) of planning permission 3/15/0719/FUL "Demolition of existing asbestos -sheeted storage buildings and replacement with two detached houses with integral garages and associated landscaping works "

- East Herts Council – granted

x) Lane Croft, Perrywood Lane (3/16/1768/PNHH)

Single storey rear extension

- East Herts Council – Prior approval not required

xi) 2 Rectory Lane (3/16/1561/HH)

Demolish existing single skin ground floor extension and construct a ground floor side/rear extension.

- East Herts Council – granted

7 Specific items

a) District Councillor Michael Freeman's Report

Mr. Smith read out District Councillor Freeman reported on the following items.

- **District Plan and Neighbourhood Plan**

The District Plan comes before an Extraordinary Meeting of the District Council on 22nd September. This is the last stage before the draft is sent to the printers prior to being issued for public comment on 3rd November. Town and Parish Councils, along with District Councillors, are asked to publicise the plan in their respective areas. The closing date for comments will be 15th December.

I have been liaising with our Neighbourhood Plan Group with a view to a joint public presentation of the District Plan with the second public consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan. A date around the third week of November has been suggested, to allow time for comments in time for the above deadline.

This will all be discussed at the next meeting of the NP Group on 5th October.

- **Development Management Training Event**

EHDC are organising a meeting at 7.00pm on 18th October to familiarise Town and Parish Council representatives on aspects of the Development Management process. Parish Councillors from Watton-at-Stone are invited to join this event.

- **Other Development Issues**

In addition to the routine applications circulated via the Clerk, the Chairman and I along with Charles Clark, from the Neighbourhood Plan Group, have met with the owner of the Mill Lane site with regard to its possible development. He undertook to send us a copy of his detailed plans. I have briefed EHDC officers.

- **Matters reported to the Police**

Since the last Parish Council meeting I have reported the discovery of a large quantity of nitrous oxide containers on the Sports Field, and concerns re motorists speeding in very noisy vehicles up and down the High Street at night. The latter problem now appears to have abated.

- **Fly tipping**

I have had to make three separate reports of fly tipping, all in Mill Lane on the Whempstead side of the bypass. Members are encouraged to report any instances they come across so that EHDC can target and monitor “hot spots.”

- **Dog Fouling**

New posters have been displayed around the village explaining the new regulations on dog fouling, and an article has been sent to “Parish News.” I have requested a further supply of the posters, and am pursuing the issue of additional dog bins as discussed at previous meetings. Additional resources have been secured to ensure the enforcement of the new regulations.

- **Litter**

Similarly, there will be new posters on littering aimed especially at those throw rubbish from their cars.

- **Report of rats – Great Innings South**

Circle Anglia have now cleared up the site adjacent to the car park at the top of Great Innings South and have undertaken to renew the traps/poison in situ there. I will continue to monitor this.

- **Parking on grassed area at Hockerill/Rectory Lane**

Despite previous requests by both Circle Anglia and EHDC, one persistent offender continues to drive and park on this area. This issue is now being tackled by Circle Anglia and EHDC jointly and I expect to meet them both on site shortly.

Sadly, the practice is spreading and today there were four additional vehicles parked on the grass. I will deal with this at the above meeting. The site itself is beginning to deteriorate markedly.

In the longer term, the Parish Council may wish to consider whether this should be one of the sites for a permanent ban on verge and pavement parking – further details to follow once all the regulations etc are in place.

- **Tripping Accident – Path Adjacent to The Bull PH**

Following the incident where a resident tripped on a protruding paving stone and fell, causing serious facial injuries, the path has been repaired by the Landlord of The Bull. However, there is no registered owner of the path and options for the permanent adoption of the path need to be considered so that the position is clearer in future.

Mr. Smith said that the Landlord of The Bull arranged for the tree roots to be removed and Blue Bury contractors re-laid then at a cost of £60 plus VAT.

b) Traffic along Station Road

Mr. Stock said that he had been involved in much communication with HCC throughout the summer re the Station Road and High Street projects. He reminded the meeting that he had copied all Parish Councillors concerning most of the events so that they could remain up-to-date with the overall status of the projects and other related issues.

We continued to get questions and complaints from residents about the on-going problems in Station Road and the High Street and our responses were based on the latest information from HCC.

The following is a summary of the update Mr. Stock gave to Parish Councillors on 15th August after his latest discussions with Farid Tilavi at HCC. This also includes what has happened since that date.

- He has had some success with junction-protection in the High Street in so much as HCC has now agreed to implement the junction-protection scheme at Rivershill (as they originally intended) and will be included in the current scheme.
- The planned junction-protection at the Station Road and Great Innings junctions with the High Street (which were also left out of the HCC mail-shot to residents) are now subject to further investigations by HCC and will not be included in the current scheme.

The same applies to the position of the mini-roundabout at the Great Innings/High Street junction.

It was agreed by those present that we remain concerned that traffic travelling in both directions along the High Street tends to ignore this mini-roundabout completely and treats it as a straight stretch of road and thus there is no evident traffic-calming whatsoever and the line-of-sight issues for traffic exiting Great Innings remain. These items to be placed on our agenda for January 2017. **Agenda: January 2017**

- Unfortunately and very disappointingly, HCC tell us that the ‘civil works’ (i.e. speed humps, platform, drainage, footpath re-routing, etc.) have been delayed and will not now start “until the school-break in October”.

- He was also told that the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)/consultation period for the implementation of double-yellow lines “will take 3 months” and is yet to start. He was given to understand that this process is about to be initiated.

Because the implementation of double-yellow lines in Station Road would so easily resolve the long-standing problems and causes for complaints in that area, he remained very disappointed by these further HCC delays and was sure that we will continue get more ‘flak’ from residents because of their belief that it’s due to a lack of action and/or will on our part.

- There was an outstanding issue about the position of the bus shelter near the Great Innings junction so Mr. Stock put Mr. Meischke in touch with Farid Tilavi about this, as Mr. Meischke has been more involved with this than he had. The situation has now been resolved and both parties agree on the position of the shelter.
- We continue to get many complaints from residents that they did not receive the HCC mail-shot detailing the schemes for Station Road and the High Street.

As a result of Mr. Stock’s complaints to HCC about this, Farid Tilavi asked him to identify who had not received or had sight of the mail-shot; a task that would be difficult and very time-consuming to achieve and not one for which we are responsible. He made it clear that any failings in the delivery of the mail-drops were down to HCC to resolve. They continue to tell us that they believe that all of the mail-shots had been delivered and some may simply have been discarded without being opened (Mr. Stock suggested that if this was the case, then it should have been foreseen and avoided by the use of a more informative line of text on the envelope (other than just ‘To the occupier’), e.g., ‘Important information enclosed concerning the traffic issues in Station Road and the High Street’. We have now posted the plans and narrative on the website and our Facebook page.

It is a shame that the apparent problems with the mail-shot have resulted in some residents becoming very frustrated with the situation and others have been given incorrect/misleading information about our involvement (happily Mr. Stock was made aware, by the Clerk, of one particular instance of the latter and was able to resolve it directly with the person concerned).

- Farid Tilavi has acknowledged receipt of Mr. Stock’s corrections and additions to HCC’s draft minutes of their meeting with us and he anticipates that we will receive the approved version from HCC in the near future.

Mr. Stock informed the meeting that all he had subsequently received from HCC was an updated ‘draft’ (which he has already copied to all Parish Councillors) and had no reason to expect that we will get anything more.

See attached.

Given that we are the instigators and drivers of the attempts to get acceptable solutions to help to resolve the serious problems experienced by the users of Station Road and the High Street, Mr. Stock said that he was extremely frustrated that he had to constantly seek updates from HCC about progress rather than them automatically contacting us when things had changed; especially in the case of significant delays and changes. After e-mailing Farid Tilavi for an update and leaving messages, Mr. Stock was told today that, due to a road-safety audit not yet being carried out, the civil works in Station Road are now planned to take place during January 2017 (not during August or October 2016 as previously stated) and at the same time as the double yellow-lines in Station Road and the double and single yellow-lines in the High Street are to be installed. He felt, and those present agreed, that to learn of this further delay in this way and at such a late stage is unacceptable. It is important that we always have the correct information to pass on to residents.

It was agreed to write to the Leader of the Hertfordshire County Council about the communication issues and on-going delays to works, and a re-assurance that the complete programme (i.e., for Station Road and the High Street) will be completed during this financial year.

Action: D. Stock/M. Smith

An item to be written for the Parish News to inform residents of this further delay on the part of HCC.

Action: D. Stock/M. Smith

c) Traffic along High Street

See above for Station Road.

There were further discussions about the changes to the double and single-yellow lines to be implemented in the High Street, because the current plan shown in the mail-shot is different to the one presented by HCC during our last meeting with them and some of the retailers. There was a certain amount of questioning about this because we had been told by HCC that they had put a lot of work into this and there was no, or very little, room for changes because of reasons of safety.

It was agreed that we monitor the situation when the lines are in use.

d) Neighbourhood Plan – progress report

Refer to item following Environment Sub-Committee and before New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee.

e) Footpath from Rivershill to the Bull car park

Refer to item 7 a, Specific items – District Councillors Michael Freeman’s report - Tripping Accident – Path Adjacent to The Bull Public House

f) Parish Council notice boards

Mr. Smith said he and the Clerk had been unable to establish the owner of the piece of land between the Station and the entrance to Moorymead Close. Although, it would appear that the Moorymead Close management company are inadvertently maintaining this plot. Mr. Smith suggested that the Parish Council erect a notice board on this site and if the owner comes forward request formal permission. This was agreed.

Mr. Smith said that the Clerk is having difficulty using the two very large notice boards and the one at the Community Hall has had its Perspex vandalised.

It was agreed to obtain the prices for two large double opening notice boards would cost and a single medium/large sized notice board for either Station Road or Great Innings roundabout sites.

Action: M. Smith/J. Allsop

g) Hedges in School Lane area

Mr. Smith said that Nick Whitehead had cut the sportsfield hedges a couple of weeks ago.

Mrs. Dinnin agreed to inspect Mr. Brett’s hedge (5 Old School Orchard) that runs adjacent to the footpath at the back of the George and Dragon to see if it needs cutting back.

Action: C. Dinnin

8 Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

In the absence of Mr. Filer, the Clerk 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			
Wages and salaries	July to September 2016		3408.03
Adam Welch	90% of invoice for 1/2 year maintenance - see chq 501429		1,152.00
Adam Welch	Strim four allotments		180.00
Sports Courts	25% deposit for new tennis court		10,057.20
BT landline -	12 month line rental in advance (line rental saver)		205.08
BDO LLP	Annual Audit		480.00
Frank Cooper and Son	Grass cutting - 4 cuts in July 2016		212.40
Adam Welch	Hedge cutting Station Road		80.00
Blue Bury Contractors	Fridge magnets for Watton School pupils re Sir Nigel Gresley Day		46.80
Frank Cooper and Son	Grass cutting - 4 cuts in July 2016		212.40
Hertfordshire County Council	Envelopes and Selloptape		21.24
Blue Bury Contractors	Grass cutting Watton Green and the Lammas		1,080.00
James Turner Limited	2 boilers for Community Hall		9,366.43
Adam Welch	Remove waste from allotments		70.00
Bidwells LLP	Rent for Diocesan land at MPPA		125.00
Affinity Water	Allotment water supply		143.95
Post Office Limited	Tax and NI		155.61
Blue Bury Contractors	Relay path between -the Bull and Rivershill -£60 plus VAT supply 4 large plans for new tennis court - £32 plus VAT		<u>110.40</u>
			<u>27,106.54</u>
Cheques received			
East Herts District Council	New Homes Bonus 2016		42,526.00
East Herts District Council	½ year precept payment		16405.00
			<u>58931.00</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
Floodlighting to 10.08.16	20.00	A. P. Access– 3 keys to main door lock	40.00
Jamie Lee – Pavilion	21.00	Timpson – 2 keys + coloured key tops	13.40
Forever Active	100.00	B&Q - Bolts	5.36
Carla Beach – Pavilion (10 weeks)	315.00	Chas Lowe – locks and bolts	<u>7.32</u>
Phillip Little - Main Hall (6 weeks)	72.00		<u>66.08</u>
Tony Silvestri – Pavilion (10 weeks)	100.00		
Michelle Ballenger-Pavilion & Main Hall	<u>52.50</u>		
	<u>680.50</u>		

Cheques issued		
Wages	July to September 2016	473.85
E.ON	Gas	76.42
E.ON	Electricity	82.30
Rachel Davis	Return of deposit for use of hall on 31/07/16	150.00
Thames Water	Waste water charges	181.89
Total Contract Cleaners	Hall cleaning in June 2016	120.00
Hertfordshire County Council	Paper hand towels and petty cash box	95.40
Blue Bury Contractors	Polypipe carpet rollers	48.00
E.ON	Gas	24.21
E.ON	Electricity	19.71
East Herts Council	Rates	129.00
D P Electrics	Repair work	264.00
Mark Blacktin	Repair/replace toilet door handles	70.00
Hertfordshire County Council	Cleaning materials including credit note	15.12
Total Contract Cleaners	Hall cleaning in June 2016	<u>120.00</u>
		<u>1869.90</u>
Cheques received		
East Herts Council	Hire of hall for election	128.00
Post office	Cash banked	95.00
Rachel Davis	Cash deposit for Fun Day	300.00
East Herts Council	Grant for library tables and chairs	862.66
Peter Khera	Hire of the Main Hall	167.40
Du Cros Court Management Ltd	Meeting Room	10.00
Felicitas Dixon	Hire of the Main Hall and Pavilion	45.00
Watton Youth Drop Inn	Hire of the Main Hall and Pavilion	157.50
		1765.56
		<u>3531.12</u>

Parish Councillors agreed the payments, which cover a ten-week period.

• **BDO – annual audit**

The Parish Council has now received 'a clean bill of health' from BDO who have signed off the annual statutory approval of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31st March 2016. As required, the Clerk displayed a notice of conclusion of audit on the Parish Council notice board for a period of two weeks.

Parish Councillors approved BDO LLP's report on the audited accounts for the year ended 31st March 2016.

• **Appointment of internal auditor**

As Jim Morrissey no longer wishes to continue as internal auditor to the Parish Council, Mr. Filer asked Mrs. McCash to find someone who would be interested in filling this position. Mrs. McCash said she was waiting to hear if a retired accountant she knows would be willing to take up this position.

Mrs. McCash to chase.

Action: H. McCash

• **Request for Budget items for 2017/18**

The Clerk asked all Parish Councillors to e-mail Mr. Filer any items they would like included in the 2017/18 budget prior to the November Parish Council meeting.

Action: Parish Councillors

• **Confirm Allotment rent and water charges for 2016/17**

At the December 2015 meeting, the Parish Council agreed that the allotment rent remains at £25 per full allotment and £12.50 for one-half of an allotment. It was also agreed to review the allotment water charges at the September 2016 Parish Council meeting.

There was no significant changes in the water bill for the year 2015/16 and therefore Parish Councillors agreed that the 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 in the first week of October.

Action: J. Allsop

Community Hall Trustees

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

• **Report and minutes of meeting held on 12th September 2016**

Because all Parish Councillors had been e-mailed a copy of the minutes of the Trustees meeting, Mr. Stock asked if anyone had any questions they wished to raise.

As there were no questions, Mr. Stock said that he would go through the Recommendations only.

- **Library grant for chairs and tables**

As recorded in the Trustees minutes, District Councillor Mike Freeman arranged for a grant from EHC to purchase two new tables and 30 chairs for the Community. These items were purchased in July. However because there was £172.53 of funds still available to spend from the grant East Herts Council agreed that additional chairs can be purchased with the remaining money.

The Trustees recommendation is that the Parish Council agrees to the purchase of the 10 additional chairs at a net cost of £178.40 and covers the short-fall of £5.87.

Parish Councillors approved the purchase. The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Internet connection progress report**

It was agreed that no decision on an internet connection will be made until more information on about its installation and the costs involved are known.

- **Update on Action plan - Replacement lighting, decoration and outside toilets**

Now that the roof on the Pavilion-side of the building has been replaced, the new LED lighting (at approximately £1414+VAT, as of 10/11/15) and the decoration work (at £1,600, and as previously approved) is approved and appropriate funding identified.

It was agreed that Mr. Meischke be asked to obtain up-to-date quotations for approval at our Parish Council meeting in October before we proceed further.

Action: J. Meischke

The outside toilets be upgraded by installing new flooring as per Richard Stevens estimate and decorate as per Mark Blacktin's quotation (i.e., £385+VAT plus £550). This was agreed.

Action: J. Meischke

Once again, Mrs. McCash and Mrs. Stanley both raised their strong concerns about how the Community Hall was funded and were unhappy about the situation in general. In response, and as only one of the two Trustees present, Mr. Stock again repeated what had been said and agreed during the recent New Homes Bonus Subcommittee meeting and the Trustees meeting. In summary, during previous meetings, it was agreed that we could not expect the Community Hall to become self-funding (certainly not in the foreseeable future and, as with the sports field and play area, the hall is provided for the benefit of our parishioners and not seen as a commercial enterprise). The Parish Council own the Community Hall and is responsible for its upkeep. Whereas the Trustees are responsible for the day-to-day management functions associated with the building, expanding its use, developing the facilities to meet the needs of Parishioners and trying to attract new activities and hirers; and other specific objectives given to them by the Parish Council. As part of this, the Trustees highlight, via recommendations to the Parish Council, the need for related expenditures (which naturally include decorating costs, improvements to the facilities, the need to replace the boiler system, etc.). In such instances it is the responsibility of the Parish Council (if it accepts a Trustee recommendation) to identify the appropriate source(s) of funding.

When asked by Mrs. McCash what he (as a Trustee) had done/was doing to identify sources of funding for future expenditures, Mr. Stock reminded her that she needed to rephrase that question and ask what are we as Parish Councillors doing? (this response was repeated by Mr. Knight, the other Trustee present). The task of the Trustees, together with the Parish Council, is to identify future needs for funding over the short, medium and long-term.

Mrs. Stanley did not see why we needed to have a board of trustees and why the Community Hall could not be run directly by the Parish Council. Mr. Stock said that, notwithstanding its charitable status, if the hall was run by the Parish Council, it would no doubt be via a subcommittee and thus no different to now.

Mr. Stock said, and it was generally accepted, that this repeated and heated discussion would not be taking place if we had not had to replace the boiler system, part of the roof and the totally unexpected expenditure incurred to the replace the Pavilion wall of windows adjacent to the sports field (which was a major safety issue) in such a short period. In general, expenditure has been what could be expected for a building of its age.

Mrs. Stanley gave credit to the Trustees for all their hard work.

The Parish Council now have access to additional funds in reserve from the sale of the land at Rivershill.

Parish Councillors are in agreement that the Trustees are doing their best to promote and maintain the hall and have spent a lot of time getting the Forever Active activities running and trying to increase the revenue for the hall. Mr. Meischke himself spends a considerable amount of his time running one of the activities and doing other tasks associated with the hall.

The Trustees are aware that there are a lot of new people in the village who don't know about the Community Hall and its facilities, and those available on the sports field itself. It is with this in mind that they intend to re-visit the marketing of what we have to offer.

Dr. Waltham has agreed to take on the lead in this task.

Action: E. Waltham/D. Stock

Funding of the 2 new boilers

After debate, Parish Councillors agreed that they should give the Community Hall a grant of £7,805.36, which is the net value of James Turners Limited's invoice. The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

Finally, Mr. Stock said that he did not understand the reasons for the recent series of negative comments aimed at the Board of Trustees by the same one or two Councillors and in particular felt that there were no misunderstanding or expectations on its part with regard to the appropriate sources of funding for the Community Hall and it was a matter for the Parish Council to resolve. Mr. Smith agreed with this comment and said that positive contributions would be welcome and of more help to enable the Board of Trustees to do its job.

- **Dots and Tots**

This item was raised by the Clerk. The Dots and Tots group, which is run for mother and toddlers in the village, currently has no volunteers to run its weekly Tuesday-morning sessions. Estelle Smith, who ran the group up until July, was unable to find someone to replace her.

The Parish Council had previously granted over £2000 to them for toys. This was from the New Homes bonus over a two-year period. The grant was on the agreement that if Dots and Tots disbanded, the toys would remain the property of the Parish Council.

Mr. Smith suggested that the Parish Council could pay someone to run the group. Concern was shown about the legal and insurance implications of doing this and it was therefore agreed not to pursue this at the present time.

The Clerk said that Dots and Tots used to hire their toys out, at £10 per party, to hirers at the Community Hall. She said she had received a request from a hirer and that Mr. Meischke said that the Parish Council should not do this because they did not know the condition of the toys and therefore could be liable if a child got hurt.

The Clerk said she had e-mailed both Caroline Hayes and Nicola Clowes, who deal with the running and finances for Dots and Tots, asking if they could help to find volunteers to run the group and they agreed to do so.

Mrs. Dinnin agreed to speak to Nicola Clowes.

Action: C. Dinnin

Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **New Tennis Court**

Mr. Knight said that the building of the new tennis court is scheduled to start on 3rd October. The groundwork needs to be done while the archaeological team are on site to oversee the proceedings. Getting them to agree a mutually convenient date has delayed the start date by several weeks.

- **Defibrillator**

Mr. Knight said that during the Parish Council meeting in July, and due to pressure from the Sports and Social Club, he had raised the issue of purchasing a defibrillator for the village. It was agreed at that time to write to the Chief Executive at the East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust to ask his views on purchasing a defibrillator; given our proximity to the Lister Hospital and expected response times and the fact that the Doctors surgery had a defibrillator available during Practice hours. Also if he is aware of any funding-streams. Mr. Smith wrote accordingly, however the response was not of much help.

Parish Councillors discussed at length whether or not there is a need for an easy-access defibrillator in the village, how it would be used and where best to locate it. To use a defibrillator a call needs to be made to an emergency service number and then an access code entered into the device so that it can be moved from its storage site and used. The machines are designed as fail-safe devices and patients cannot be 'shocked' unless there is a definite need. It was agreed that if one is installed, it should be in a central location and close to where sporting activities take place; an obvious place being in the High Street and close to the Bull Public House. Mr. Smith said that old telephone boxes are often used to house a defibrillator. However, if the Parish Council did consider doing this, they would need to purchase this listed Red Telephone box from British Telecom and establish what related issues needed to be resolved (e.g. applying for Listed Building consent).

Although the Watton Place Clinic has recently purchased a defibrillator, it is not available 24/7. Also due to demands, we cannot always expect/rely on an excellent response times for an emergency ambulance to reach Watton-at-Stone. The general feeling therefore was that an easy access 24/7 defibrillator would be a potential life-saving asset for the village. If funding was available or could be identified, Mr. Stock said that he would find it hard to justify not obtaining such an item of equipment for the village

Depending on the model, a defibrillator costs in the region of £1,400 to £2,000. However, Mrs. McCash said that the best model on the market cost £2,400.

All Parish Councillors present at the meeting, with the exception of Mrs. Stanley who abstained, voted in favour of pursuing grant-aid to fund the purchase of a defibrillator.

Mr. Smith and Mr. Knight to liaise to pursue appropriate funding-streams. **Action: M. Smith/I. Knight**

- **Tennis nets and tennis post winder mechanism**

Mr. Knight said it was agreed several months ago that the Parish Council need to replace the two damaged tennis nets. Collier Sports can provide the nets at £129 each (plus VAT and delivery) if two or more are purchased.

In addition, two new tennis net winder mechanism are required. These have previously been purchased from Newitts and will currently cost £78.32 (plus VAT and delivery).

Mr. Smith suggested that we could purchase both the nets and the tennis post winder mechanism from the contractors who are installing the new tennis court. He agreed to speak to them. **Action: M. Smith**

Mr. Smith suggested that when the earth banking is done around the new court the area, it is terraced instead of being a large bank. This was agreed.

Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Allotments**

Mrs. Dinnin said that now that the Parish Council have agreed that the water charges for 2016/17 will remain the same as in 2015/16 (refer to item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee – Confirm Allotment rent and water charges for 2016/17) the annual invoices can go out.

Mrs. Dinnin said that the Clerk had asked if the invoices could be sent via e-mail, wherever possible. This was agreed. **Action: J. Allsop**

Mrs. Dinnin said she was expecting quite a few tenants to give up their allotment plots.

- **P3 grant update**

Work to repair and upgrade the wooden kissing gates on the Church Field, one at the High Street end and one at the entrance to the Churchyard; as well as replace the broken wooden stile on the Church field, at the entrance to footpath 2, has all been completed to a very high standard.

The total cost of the work was £730, leaving the Parish Council with £270 of P3 funds to either spend on another village project, or the funds could be used to repair a footpath on the Parishes boundary with Datchworth. Parish Councillors agreed the latter. Mrs. Dinnin to notify Countryside Management Services accordingly. **Action: C. Dinnin**

- **War memorial**

Mrs. Dinnin said that she had inspected the War Memorial garden and some additional work is required to this area. Parish Councillors agreed that Adam Welch should be instructed to do the work.

Action: C. Dinnin

Neighbourhood Plan – progress report (item 7 d)

Mrs. Hammon read from her report dated 27 September, see attached.

See attached

New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee

- **Report on meeting held on 5th September 2016**

Mrs. Stanley apologised that no minutes had been sent to Parish Councillors. These have been produced and will be issued soon. **Action: M. Stanley/J. Allsop**

Mrs. Stanley said that the Parish Council hold over £80,000 of New Homes Bonus funds.

East Herts Council wrote earlier in the year stating that New Homes Bonus funding awards will be significantly reduced in the year 2018/19 and reduce further still in 2019/20 down to a couple of hundred pounds.

Parish Councillors present at the New Homes Bonus meeting agreed to make available a figure of £10,000 of New Homes Bonus funds to be shared amongst village organisations. This has been advertised within the village and a deadline date for applications is Friday 25th November 2016. The New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee asked Parish Councillors not present at their meeting on 5th September (namely: Mrs. Hammon and Mrs. McCash) to endorse this decision. Mrs. Hammon and Mrs. McCash were in agreement.

Mrs. Stanley said that the New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee would nurture the idea of part-funded projects in 2017/18 encouraging applications to have raised some funds towards their project.

b) Routine Reports

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

Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke to arrange for the emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests to be carried out. **Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke**

ii) **Gas and electricity meter readings**

The Clerk to e-mail Mr. Meischke at the end of each month to ask him to take the gas and electricity meter readings.

iii) **Weekly reports - Fire Inspection and shower tests**

Nothing adverse to report.

iv) **Monthly village-report**

Mrs. McCash completed the report on 24th and 26th September 2016.

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

- **Fence at top corner of sportsfield** – as reported under item 5 d, Action points outstanding - Inspect sportsfield post and rail and take action as required, the fence appears to have been damaged due to the installation of new barbed wire fence installed behind it.
- **Safety surface under large swings** – very worn. Mr. Smith said that he and Mr. Meischke are monitoring this area.
- **Roof vent on car park side of the Community Hall** – this heating vent appears to be coming away from the roof with a gap between it and the roof. Mr. Smith to inspect. **Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke**
- **Mill Lane** – lots of dog waste, culverts overgrown and the area looks very unhappy because of the disused Mill site.
- **War Memorial garden** – refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee – War Memorial.

v) **Weekly sportsfield**

Nothing to report.

vi) **Website**

- **Speak to Jill Cox re the design of a new Parish Council website**

Mrs. Hammon said she had e-mailed Jill Cox about the design of a new Parish website and was now awaiting a reply. This item to remain to be placed on the October Parish Council agenda.

Agenda: 11/2016

vii) **Facebook**

No items were identified.

viii) **Highway and Lighting faults**

- **High Street** – lighting columns 15, 45 and 46 are on all day.
The Clerk to notify Highways accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

9 Correspondence received

a) **East Herts Council – S106 funding for the Tennis Court**

East Herts Council have confirmed in writing that the Parish Council will receive £38,000 of S106 funding.

b) **East Herts Parish and Urban Conference on Wednesday 26th October**

This meeting was confused with a another meeting of similar content which had been cancelled

Mr. Smith agreed that he and one other Councillor would attend if it could be arranged.

The Clerk to notify East Herts Council accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

c) **CDA - Hertfordshire's Rural Conference 2016 – Wednesday 19th October**

No Parish Councillors put their name forward to attend this conference.

d) **Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) – train timetable consultation**

Mr. Smith said it has been brought to our attention that Govia Thames Railway are conducting a train timetable consultation.

Mrs. Hammon said that the consultation was quite ambiguous and includes the cancellation of one of the morning rush-hour trains from Watton-at-Stone. She said that she had been taking photos of the Watton-at-Stone station platform daily as she awaits her train to London, and both platforms are full of commuters.

A new platform is scheduled to be built at Stevenage station sometime during the period 2019-2024, which will be used to turn round the trains that terminate at Stevenage. Currently the turnaround of these trains is disrupting other services that go further north from Stevenage as they block the line. In the consultation, it is proposed that the Moorgate to Stevenage service will terminate at Watton-at-Stone and passengers will be bussed to Stevenage and Hertford North, this in turn will cause traffic congestion in Watton-at-Stone and delay to some of the 1100 passengers using this stretch of the train service. This is where the

consultation is ambiguous on the one hand there is concern that Watton-at-Stone station may close. On the other hand, after the new platform has been built, the service to Watton-at-Stone may be greatly enhanced. The effects of the future of the station greatly affect the neighbourhood plan, without a station Watton-at-Stone is not such an attractive village for commuters and therefore the pressure on additional housing is reduced.

The Parish Council agreed to consider writing to Govia Thameslink asking for clarification on the plans for Watton-at-Stone station and when we can expect work on the new Stevenage platform to be completed. However, it was agreed to find out what action District Councillor Mike Freeman intends to take before taking this matter further. This item to be placed on the agenda for the October Parish Council meeting.

Agenda: 10/2016

e) Annual playground inspection report

East Herts Council e-mailed a copy of the Annual playground inspection carried out at the sportsfield on 15th August by the Play inspection company.

A copy of the inspection report to be e-mailed to all Parish Councillors.

Action: J. Allsop

This item to be placed on the October agenda.

Agenda: 10/2016

f) East Herts Council – Planning training event on Tuesday 18th October S106 funding for the Tennis Court

The Clerk said she has asked East Herts Council to reserve two places for the training event on 18th October. Mrs. Hammon said that she would speak to the Steering Group at their next meeting on 8th October and advice Mr. Smith and the Clerk which members would be attending the training to enable East Herts District Council can be notified accordingly.

Action: C. Hammon

10 Village organisations

Nothing to report.

11 Items for Parish News

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

- Station road – traffic update.

Action: M. Smith/D. Stock

The meeting closed at 2140

The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 18th October 2016.