

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 15th November 2016

Present:	Mr. Michael Smith (Chairman)	Mrs. Christine Dinnin
	Mr. Denis Filer	Mrs. Catherine Hammon (after 1921)
	Mr. Ian Knight	Mrs. Helen McCash
	Mrs. Margaret Stanley	Mr. David Stock
	Dr. Emma Waltham	Mrs. Jane Allsop (Clerk)
Public:	District Councillor Michael Freeman (after 2023 to 2116)	

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence: Mr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman).

2 Public Participation

None.

3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

None.

4 Declaration of Interests

Mr. Filer declared an interest in item 6 b i, Planning decision - Land Adjacent to the Moat House, Perrywood Lane.

5 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 18th October 2016**
Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved.

b) Review of actions

1. **Investigate cost and funding-streams re a defibrillator for the village**
Refer to item 8 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee – Defibrillator.
2. **Obtain prices of one new notice boards**
The Clerk is in the process of investigating prices of new notice boards. **Action: J. Allsop**
3. **Obtain quotation for the path around the Community Hall and Church Walk to be cut back**
Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee.
4. **Ask Tom Goldsmith if we can retain the underspend of our P3 grant**
Unfortunately, Tom Goldsmith has already allocated this funding to another project and therefore the Parish Council will need to return the £270.
5. **Ask Paul Reynolds if he could pressure wash the flagstones around the War Memorial**
Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee – War Memorial Cleaning.

c) Action points resolved

1. Give Mrs. McCash the details of the defibrillator contact in Welwyn
2. Give Mrs. McCash contact name of person who would be willing to fundraise re defibrillator
3. Chase contractors re prices for tennis nets and winder mechanism (ref to item 8 a, R&A)
4. Inspect and repair sportsfield post & rail fence when installing additional fencing by the new tennis court
5. Monitor 5-a-side goal posts
6. Arrange for the printing of two fliers
7. Deliver fliers to all household in the village
8. Alter incorrect income receipt entries from Friends of Community Hall to Forever Active
9. Carry-out 6-month inspection of Parish Council and Community Hall accounts
10. Renew SiteGround webhosting for one-year only
11. Work out the relevant Tax and NI figures for the Clerk's amended salary
12. Arrange for the Clerk to be reimbursed for 3-year webhosting expenditure made in 2013
13. Give Mr. Meischke the name of the company who previously repaired the windows in the Main Hall
14. Instruct Mark Blacktin to remove one of the toilet cisterns and reinstate it after it has been repaired
15. Contact Kompan re problems with Crazy Daisy spinning pole and swing
16. Ask floodlighting contractors to cut back the branch overhanging the floodlights & replace a broken bulb
17. Write to allotment holder re their allotment agreement
18. **Ask Adam Welch to submit quotation for removing tree at entrance of the Allotments:** Outstanding.
Action: C. Dinnin
19. **Order two large litterbins from Glasdon:** Outstanding.
Refer to item 8 b iv, Routine Reports - Monthly village-report.

20. Ask Mark Blacktin to quote for treating the ornate village sign post
21. Find out what signage was on the post at the Church Lane/Perrywood Lane crossroads
22. Contact Highways re streetlight stump
23. Give Scout and Guide Group grant cheque towards village firework display
24. Inform Mr. Smith the current S137 allowances

d) Action points outstanding

1. **Provide the Parish Council with an up to date copy of the Major Incident Plan for Watton-at-Stone**
Mrs. McCash provided the Clerk with an electronic copy of the Major Incident Plan for Watton-at-Stone, via e-mail, on 27th October 2016.
2. **Give Mr. Filer budget items for 2017/18**
Mr. Filer said that to date he had only received items from Mr. Knight. He has asked Mrs. Stanley to join him and the Clerk to put together the 2017/18 budgets for the Parish Council and Community Hall.
3. **Look at New Homes Bonus minutes before sending them to Parish Councillors**
Mr. Stock apologised that he had not been able to look at the New Homes Bonus minutes since his return from holiday and said he would do so within the next two days and e-mail his revisions to Mrs. Stanley accordingly. **Action: D. Stock**
4. **Obtain prices for a new Parish Council notice board**
This is a duplication of item 5 b 2, Review of actions - Obtain prices of one new notice boards.
6. **Find someone who would be willing to be the internal auditor for the Parish Council**
Refer to item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee - Appointment of internal auditor.

6 Planning

Mrs. McCash reported on the following items.

a) Applications

None

b) Decisions

- i) **Land Adjacent to the Moat House, Perrywood Lane (3/16/2005/FUL)**
Construct two detached dwellings - East Herts Council – refused
Mrs. McCash said that the primary reasons for this application being refused was that the properties were too high and too large (approximatley 6 times tht of the existng stable block).
- ii) **14 Glebe Close (3/16/2098/HH)**
Proposed single storey flat roof extensions - East Herts Council – granted
Mrs. Hammon arrived at meeting at 1921

7 Specific items

a) District Councillor Michael Freeman’s Report

Refer to item directly following 8 a, Community Hall Trustees.

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

Mr. Smith said that this event, which he attended with Mr. Meischke and Mr. Freeman, replaced the separate Parish Council and Town conferences by combining them. He e-mailed the following report to all Parish Councillors on 31st October.

‘This was a well attended presentation as questions were not encouraged and consequently a lot of ground was covered.

Subjects covered were the District Plan update and Local Government finance.

The District Plan was unveiled and hard copies made available. They are at pains to emphasize that this was an all-encompassing enquiry into all aspects of community living and not just dwelling provision but the knock on effects of development. In summary, one can say that little has changed in the expectations, as we understand them and that 500 houses are expected from the Villages. The plan has been evolved in very close collaboration with Uttlesford, Epping and Harlow Councils and all will submit this coming week. The planning inspectorate, in preparation for the expected rush of applications has been working closely with planning authorities so that applications are compliant with the NPPF.

The District Council said that we should expect year on year increases in Council tax after years of restraint. The big change in Local authority finance will be the 100% retention of business rates. Currently this stands at 6% but 100% retention is being trialled this year with the expectation that it will be universal by 2020. With it of course comes extra responsibilities, this can only increase the load on Local Councillors! New homes bonus may come under greater scrutiny as monetary powers are devolved and we should aim to raise more from 106 and CIL funding. Apparently, NHS property pays business rates and there is a push to scrap this charge to help NHS finances.

There were then four short presentations under the heading Health and Well-being on which there is a section in the district plan and may be of interest to the NP group. It was really about social awareness particularly Loneliness which can lead to significant health problems in itself. It also highlighted the effects of dementia in society. I quite liked the idea of Village Wardens. This would require the efforts of a very special group of discrete and socially aware persons who would quietly assist those with difficulties. In Walkern a similar group were given funds from Village events to alleviate financial and emotional distress where recognised. They also highlighted lack of confidence affecting the ability to engage. Forever active received a boost from Sawbridgeworth where they seem unable to meet demand!

The second group of presentations considered efforts to make East Herts welcoming and attractive. Community safety headed up by Duncan Wallace was one topic and following this, I asked him to provide us with some figures for the co-funding of a PCSO. If in conjunction with other villages, we could guarantee police presence most days I think it worth considering. Organisers of Ware in Bloom told us about their experience. Perhaps we could consider something similar.'

Mr. Smith said that Sergeant Wallace had e-mailed (on 10th November) stating that the co-funded figures for a PCSO are £14,250 per year. Constabulary pays the other half (section 1.4 of the SLA. Costs can be subject of review). The contract would be for an initial 2-year period.

Parish Councillors agreed that the Clerk should contact approximately 10 Parish Councils in East Herts asking them if they would be interested in helping pay for a dedicated PCSO. **Action: J. Allsop/M. Smith**

It was agreed to submit an article in the February issue of the Parish News to find out if anyone is interested in holding a "Watton-at-Stone in Bloom" event. **Action: M. Smith**

c) Traffic along Station Road

Mr. Stock said that because he had only recently returned from a month-long holiday he had not been active on this item and was therefore not up-to-date with it.

Mr. Smith said that, as reported at our October meeting, he had sent a letter, together with a copy of the Station Road article he wrote for the November issue of the Parish News, to the Leader of HCC. To date, he had not received a reply. He mentioned that District Councillor Freeman is getting East Herts Council to put pressure on HCC re Station Road.

Mr. Stock said that the current situation with regard to Station Road and the High Street is totally unacceptable because of the unreported on-going delays and lack of communication with us. He is also very concerned about how close we are to the end of the current financial year and the 'funding-protection' for the project if it is not completed before the start of the year 2017/18, which he fears is highly likely.

He feels that urgent action is required to ensure that we are back in the communication-loop with all interested parties to ensure that we are kept fully up-to-date on the overall scheme and the current time-scales for its installation. We cannot tolerate being in the situation where we are not in possession of the latest valid information to pass on to our parishioners. To say the least, we have been pro-active from the start of the project to try to resolve some of the issues in Station Road and the High Street and he feels let down by the recent breakdown in communications on the part of HCC. All of this was agreed by those present.

Mr. Stock's immediate objective is to now get simple monthly-updates from HCC on the status of the project (e.g., what changes, if any, have been made to the scheme since last presented to us and the residents of our village) and the latest timescales (e.g., the start and end-dates for the scheme as a whole and the components thereof). He sees this as a reasonable thing to ask of HCC.

Mr. Stock to meet urgently with Mr. Smith and District Councillor Freeman to discuss the latest situation and agree the way forward. **Action: D. Stock/M. Smith/M. Freeman**

d) Traffic along High Street

See above.

e) Neighbourhood Plan – progress report

Dr. Waltham said that 2nd consultation process starts on Saturday 26th November. The Steering Group committee have been very busy putting information together for their display boards and Mehron Kirk and Mrs. Hammon have been responsible for writing most of the literature contained in them.

One of the information boards will contain paragraph views from lots of the organisations in the village. Dr. Waltham said she had drafted a paragraph for the Parish Council to include on the information board and the following text was agreed.

'The Parish Council would like to see the village benefit from new facilities and amenities if there is further housing development. In the past residents have told us that they would like more recreational facilities (particularly for youth football) and better parking provision in the village centre. We would therefore support Neighbourhood Plan proposals which helped meet those needs.'

In addition to the information boards in Community Hall, the Steering Group will be putting up a series of notices on the boards adjacent to the Londis village shop. The Clerk said that she could also empty the Parish Council's large lockable notice board in this area, if they need extra space.

Dr. Waltham said that at the October Parish Council she had reported that the Steering Group had been surprised about Watton-at-Stone not having any housing numbers being specified in the District plan.

Extract from District Plan.

'Policy GBR1 Green Belt

Planning applications within the Green Belt, as defined on the Policies Map, will be considered in line with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework. II. The villages of Hertford Heath, Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets, and Watton-at-Stone will be encouraged to consider whether it is appropriate to amend their Green Belt boundary through the formulation of a Neighbourhood Plan to accommodate additional development especially where it contributes to wider sustainability objectives and the delivery of community benefits.'

There is no specific number allocated to Watton-at-Stone, but the plan states that the Group 1 villages are together expected to provide land sufficient for a total of 500 houses. The plan details the required number for each village apart from Hertford Heath, Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets, and Watton-at-Stone, which are all in the Green Belt. Although no number is allocated to each of these villages, the total allocated to the other Group 1 villages falls short of the 500 target by 174. If that figure is divided by 3, a rough expectation for Watton-at-Stone is in the region of 58 (much smaller than the 92 dwellings specified in earlier drafts of the plan). However, this figure depends on how much land is made available by other villages. As a sustainable location, the pressure remains on Watton-at-Stone to release Green Belt land for housing.

Dr. Waltham said that she, together with Mr. Freeman and Mr. Smith, would be meeting with Claire Sime (Planning Policy Manager at East Herts Council) on Thursday 17th November, to ensure there is a smooth passage and all potential problems are 'ironed-out' once Watton-at-Stone submit their neighbourhood plan.

Mrs. Hammon reported that, on the evening of the October Parish Council meeting (18th October), she attended the East Herts Council's planning training event with Clive Bell, who is a member of the Steering Group. She said that the meeting was well attended by the smaller villages in East Herts but as far as she was aware there were no representatives from the towns. The evening started with a presentation on general planning and an overview of the administrative law principles involved. This was followed by a very useful presentation of the planning law framework by Kevin Steptoe, dealing with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), local plans at district level, and neighbourhood plans. Mrs. Hammon found the discussion very helpful in understanding how the Watton-at-Stone neighbourhood plan will (and must) fit into the wider policies. The presentation then went on to explain the planning approval process. Only 10% of planning applications are decided at committee level, the remainder are decided by planning officers.

The meeting helped Mrs. Hammon to understand how the Steering Group might deal with our Green Belt issues. There are two options open to Watton-at-Stone. Option 1 is not to release any Green Belt, but this would leave us at risk if other areas in East Herts do not come forward with sufficient sites, because, firstly, the East Herts draft District Plan provides for the possibility that EHDC might release green belt in our parish if we do not, and because, secondly, of the general risk that in times of undersupply, the district council's ability to refuse a planning application is limited. Option 2 is to release a limited amount of greenbelt land and retain control. These options are one of the focuses of the upcoming neighbourhood plan on 26/27 November. Either way, the neighbourhood plan will include policies specifying housing density of any development, design features, any additional amenities etc to ensure that even if the village decides not to release any green belt land, we retain control over *what* is built, even if we lose control over *where* it is built. Mr. Filer asked if the Steering Group was recommending Option 2. Mrs. Hammon explained that it is not: the consultation is entirely open and the parish as a whole is being asked for its view as to whether any land should be released and if so, what land. The risks of not releasing any land will be explained in the consultation.

As regards the East Herts District Plan, the Parish Council will agree its response at its meeting on 13th December and submit it to East Herts Council before the deadline date of 15th December. The Parish Council will also be able to discuss at their meeting on 13th December, its public response to the Neighbourhood Plan exhibition on 26th and 27th November and subsequent consultation. Mr. Smith said that due to the short timescales involved, he had put together a draft response to the District Plan, which he then read out, and asked Parish Councillors to e-mail him their comments.

Mr. Smith to e-mail all Parish Councillors a copy of the draft response for their comments.

Action: M. Smith/Parish Councillors

f) Parish Council notice boards

Refer to item 5 b 2, Review of actions - Obtain prices of one new notice boards.

g) Clerk's letterbox

The Clerk said that her letterbox had been broken by bunches of keys being repeatedly put through the door. She said that her husband had replaced this on several occasions over the last 23 years she had been Clerk, for the same reasons. Her current letterbox is made of plastic and she asked if the Parish Council would consider paying for a new metal letterbox at a cost of £39.99. Mr. Smith asked if her husband would fit the letterbox and she confirmed he would. Parish Councillors agreed the purchase.

Action: J. Allsop

h) High speed broadband

Mr. Smith said that when Dr. Norden originally contacted Virgin Media about high-speed internet for the residents in the School Lane area as well as the Community Hall they were given a verbal figure of £8,000 as the installation cost. This has now risen to £20,000, which cannot be considered as residents have only raised £5,000 towards the project.

Mr. Smith said that he has been in contact with British Telecom re their Community Fibre Partnership to provide fast internet in out of reach areas. They had already identified Heath Mount School as a possible area; however, Virgin Media already supplies this site. Mr. Smith said we might be able to persuade them to give the Community Hall and residents in School Lane a fibre connection. Grants are available up to the value of £20,000. Mr. Smith to pursue this item. **Action: M. Smith**

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 rents	<u>20.75</u>	None	
	<u>20.75</u>		
Cheques issued			
SiteGround	3-year website hosting for years 2013-2016		175.14
1st Scout & Guide Group	donation towards village fire work event		500.00
Wages and salaries	October/November 2016		1189.05
Frank Cooper and Son	football pitch marking on the sportsfield		78.00
Perfect Ground Solutions	cricket square ground maintenance		979.20
J. Allsop	SiteGround - 1-year website hosting for years 2016-2017		100.08
Frank Cooper and Son	Grass cutting - 7th October 2016		70.80
Triagraphics	printing of 2 x leaflets for distribution around the village		75.00
Floodlighting Limited	4 x floodlighting columns for new tennis court		14,402.40
Adam Welch	2nd payment for maintenance work		<u>1,350.00</u>
			<u>18,919.67</u>
Cheques received			
Community Hall	Repayment of James Turner invoice for 2 new boilers		<u>9366.43</u>
			<u>9366.43</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
Floodlighting from 10.08.16 to 10	160.00	Access Locks – locks	11.99
Forever Active	100.00	Domesticare	2.99
Carla Beach – (4 weeks)	156.00	Wickes – paint	30.99
Tony Silvestri – Pavilion (4 weeks)	40.00	Chas Lowe	<u>9.00</u>
Amy Crickmay-Heraty – Main Hall & Pavilion	60.00		<u>54.97</u>
Stacey Thompson – Main Hall & Pavilion	<u>51.00</u>		
	<u>567.00</u>		
Cheques issued			
Total Contract Cleaners	Hall cleaning in September 2016		150.00
Mark Blacktin	Renovation work to outside toilets		550.00
Mark Blacktin	Trim around floodlighting coin box in meeting room wall		90.00
Mark Blacktin	Remove and replace one cistern and reinstate 2 toilets		125.00
Wages	October/November 2016		186.30
HMRC	VAT rebate		140.96
Parish Council (501452)	James Turner Limited - new boilers etc		<u>9,366.43</u>
			<u>10,608.69</u>
Cheques received			
Sports and Social Club	Hire of the Community Hall facilities		370.00
Badminton Club	Main Hall hire		142.50
S. Hankin	Pavilion hire		<u>21.00</u>
			<u>533.50</u>

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

- **Appointment of internal auditor**

Mrs. McCash reported that she had been unable to find someone willing to do the internal audit of the Parish Council accounts because they are not covered by Professional Indemnity (PI) insurance. PI Insurance is normally associated with companies and not individuals.

To have this insurance you need to be associated with an accountancy company. She said that she had discussed this matter with Mr. Filer and suggested that one option would be for her son (Stuart McCash) who is 2/3 of the way through his chartered accountancy course, to do the internal audit for the Parish Council under the umbrella of McCash and Hay, so that he is covered by their PI insurance. Mr. Filer said that he had asked his daughter, who works for an accountancy company, how much it would cost to have an internal audit done and she had told him it would be in the region of £600 to £1200. Mrs. McCash said that she had obtained similar figures from her contacts.

After discussion, Parish Council decided that this appeared to be a good solution and agreed to appoint Stuart McCash as the internal auditor for the Parish Council, working under the employment of McCash and Hay.

Mrs. McCash to notify Stuart McCash accordingly.

Action: H. McCash

Mike Freeman arrived at the meeting 2023.

- **6-monthly statement of accounts for the Parish Council and Community Hall**

Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of the 6-monthly statement of accounts for the period ending the 30th September 2016.

Mr. Filer went through the expenditure and income items for both the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts and explained the variations in both statements. Mr. Filer said that he was not unduly concerned in the variations of these six-monthly figures

- **6-monthly inspection of accounts**

Mrs. McCash said that she carried-out the six-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 2016/17.

Mrs. McCash asked Parish Councillors to ensure that they provided the Clerk with a proper paper trail of approval for all orders/expenditures. This can either be done in writing or via e-mail. 'Guidance for e-mail audit trail' to be written and discussed at next months meeting

Agenda: 12/16

- **Arrange meeting for Budget and Finance Sub-Committee to discuss budget**

Mr. Filer to organise a meeting of the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee to discuss the 2017/18 budgets.

Action: D. Filer.

Community Hall Trustees

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

- **Outside toilets – Refurbishment**

The refurbishment work to the outside toilets has now been completed with the installation of the new flooring and the reinstallation of two toilets pans. The malfunctioning toilet cistern has also been repaired.

Dr. Waltham said that Mr. Meischke is sourcing a timed automatic locking system for the toilets so they do not have to be locked and unlocked daily. The lock would have an automatic release button inside so that anyone using the facilities when the timer was activated to lock could then open the door.

This is likely to cost in the region of £500-£600.

- **Pavilion - Lighting and decoration**

Mick Taylor will start the decoration work on Tuesday 3rd January. Before Christmas, D. P. Electrics will alter the ceiling lighting so it hangs on temporary chains and new LED lighting will be installed after the decoration work has been completed.

Mr. Meischke will ask the decorators to make good the paintwork around the coin meters in the meeting room at no extra cost.

- **Path surrounding Community Hall**

Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Church walk.

- **Forever Active report**

The numbers attending the Forever Active activities have continued to improve with the exception of the Tai Chi class.

A coach has been found to instruct the Carpet Bowls Group. He is a national champion with a wealth of experience; however, he is not trained as a coach. There was some concern that he would not be covered under the Forever Active insurance policy, but Dr. Waltham believes this problem has now been resolved.

- **Update on hiring of the Community Hall facilities**

Dr. Waltham said that hirings are improving and it is hoped that ‘Bounce’ classes (mini-trampolines) will start several sessions in the Community Hall in the New Year.

- **New light meter installation**

Mr. Smith said he would like to mention that Mr. Meischke has put in a lot of hard work into the installation of the floodlighting meter for the new tennis court. This has involved cutting a hole in the Community Hall wall, feeding electricity cables from under the footpath down under the meeting room floor and up to the new meter. Mr. Smith estimated that the work would have cost the Parish Council around £600 if a contractor had been asked to do the work.

Refer also to item 8 a Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee – New Tennis Court.

- **Repair of high level window winder mechanism of in the Main Hall**

It was reported at the October Parish Council meeting that one set of the high Level windows in the Main Hall was not closing properly. Mr. Meischke contacted the person who repaired the windows last time and they no longer do this type of work. After contacting numerous companies, only one contractor, MK Windows, was willing to quote to repair the winder mechanism. Their quote (dated 26th October) for £1095 is for the following work.

‘to replace window winding gear to 1 no set at high level, consisting of 5 no gear units, 1 no winding bow, 10 metres of cable and leave all good working order’.

Mr. Smith obtained a further quotation of £795 from MK Windows, to reduce the number of opening windows from five down to three. This will reduce the pressure on the winder mechanism system and consequently should prolong its life. Parish Councillors approved the quotation via e-mail and the work has now been completed. Whilst on site, the contractors also reduced the other opening windows from five down to three at no added cost.

- **Repair work required to Crazy Daisy spinning pole and hammock swing**

The Clerk said that she had ordered the replacement parts for the Crazy Daisy spinning pole, at a cost of £45 plus VAT (£20 of the net value being delivery charges). The estimated delivery date is the first week in December.

Mr. Smith commended the Community Hall Trustees for improving the hirings at the Community Hall. He said that their might come a stage when we need a dedicated manager for the hall.

District Councillor Michael Freeman’s Report

Mr. Freeman reported on the following items

- **District and Neighbourhood Plans**

East Herts Council's District Plan is now out for consultation with a deadline for responses of 15th December.

The second Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Event has been organised for the weekend of the 26/27 November in the Community Hall.

- **Govia Thameslink Timetable Consultation**

Although we have now nailed the rumours that our station is to close, there is still concern over how long the replacement buses from Watton-at-Stone to Stevenage will last. East Herts Council in conjunction with Herts County Council and our MP Sir Oliver Heald are applying concerted pressure (a) on Network Rail to get the new platform at Stevenage built as quickly as possible so that we have an end date to the disruption and (b) on Govia to come up with an alternative to the use of buses.

Mrs. Hammon said that the train service she uses from London is already being disrupted because its stops at Hertford North and does not carry on to Watton-at-Stone or Stevenage. Due to a shortage of taxis at Hertford North, she is sometimes left stranded.

- **Sustainable Transport**

Mr. Freeman said that linked to the above and our desire to get more people out of their cars and on to alternative forms of transport including walking and cycling, he is on a working party looking at long term Sustainable Transport options for East Herts. “Sustainable” in this context means economically and environmentally as well as durable. Communities like ours, which are situated in rural areas, can often be faced with little choice but to use the car. Mr. Freeman will welcome any contribution the Parish Council may wish me to make to this debate.

- **Fouling by dogs**

The new regulations are in force and signs have been displayed around the village. Measures are planned to deal with whoever it is that has taken to remove the signs placed in Church Walk.

Following discussions with concerned residents who point out that it is very often children who exercise the family dog, and that children may not be aware of the regulations on fouling, I hope to organise a village talk on responsible dog ownership aimed at parents and children alike.

- **Parking on grass at Hockerill**

The great majority of vehicle owners who previously parked on this grassed area have heeded our request to stop doing so. Steps are in hand to deal with the one or two persistent offenders.

- **Station Road/High Street Traffic Issues**

Awaiting response from Terry Douris, HCC's Head of Highways to the comprehensive complaint which Mr. Freeman sent him on 25th October.

Mr. Stock said that we need to sort this and that the Parish Council should now write again to HCC without further delay. Mr. Freeman, Mr. Smith and Mr. Stock agreed to meet to discuss the subject further.

Refer to item 7 c, Specific items – Traffic along Station Road

- **Circle Anglia Issues**

We have enjoyed an improved level of response to individual householder issues in recent weeks. I await a full reply from Circle Anglia with regard to the very poor condition of the surface in the garage block between Hockerill and Rectory Lane.

- **Speeding sign**

The new speed indicator equipment has now been installed at the corner of Motts Close. Our early monitoring suggests that most people are respecting it, but we will need to continue to operate at the site from time to time as there are still a couple of hotheads.

- **Mill Lane site**

Mr. Freeman and Mr. Smith have not heard from David Toll re his derelict building in Mill Lane. The green door has been reinstated but another door has now broken into. It has been reported that people have been seen cooking rabbits in the building. Mr. Freeman said he had also seen a bag of fresh groceries outside the building.

Mr. Freeman said that East Herts are not able to put a demolition order on this building, however he would pursue with them putting pressure on the site owner to make this building safe.

Mike Freeman left at 2116.

Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **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. At the September Parish Council meeting he reported that Collier Sports could provide the nets at £129 each (plus VAT and delivery) if two or more are purchased. In addition, Newitts can supply a tennis post winder mechanism at a cost of £78.32 (plus VAT and delivery). Mr. Smith had then suggested that we could purchase both the nets and the tennis post winder mechanism from the contractors who are installing the new tennis court and they agreed a price of approximately £30 less.

Mr. Knight said that as the quality of the nets and tennis post winder mechanism is unknown from the tennis court contractors, and he would therefore like to purchase the nets from Collier Sports and the tennis post winder mechanism from Newitts. This was agreed. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **New Tennis Court**

Mr. Knight said that the tennis court building work is now complete and the new floodlighting installed. The floodlighting meter has also been connected; however, the lock to the coin box is jammed and Mr. Meischke will be asking Michael Lewis (A. P Access) to unlock the box. **Action: J. Meischke**

A footpath to the new tennis court needs to be installed and Mark Blacktin has quoted £830 (£380 for material and £450 for labour). Mr. Smith said that the bill could be reduced by the VAT element if the Parish Council purchase the materials. Parish Councillors approved Mark Blacktin's quotation to install the footpath and agreed that the Parish Council should purchase the materials.

Mr. Knight said we are waiting for the archaeological report and their invoice.

The floodlighting contractors cut back part of the Spanish Oak tree branch that was overhanging the tennis court, however it needs cutting back further. Mrs. Dinnin to obtain a quotation from Adam Welch. **Action: C. Dinnin**

Three to four paving slabs need laying to enable users to walk between the MPPA and the new courts. Mark Blacktin to be asked to install this when installing the footpath to the new court.

Mr. Smith has installed a temporary fence to keep horses away from the newly seeded areas of grass. When this area has been established, a permanent post and rail wooden fencing will need to be installed using some of the old fencing material.

- **Sportsfield**

Mr. Knight said that the football goal posts at the Community Hall end of the field were pushed over by vandals and need reseating because they are unstable. He asked John Fitzjohn to obtain a quote for re-concreting the goal post sockets.

Mr. Smith agreed to inspect the football posts.

Action: M. Smith

Mr. Knight said that plantain weeds are compromising the sportsfield grass. Mr. Smith and Mr. Knight to look at the condition of the sportsfield grass and advise what action is required.

Action: M. Smith/I. Knight

- **Defibrillator**

Mrs. McCash said she was actioned to looking into the costs of providing a defibrillator for the village.

She spoke to St. Johns Ambulance, who were very helpful and were able to provide her with all aspects of purchasing and installing a defibrillator. The type, which most impressed her, is a fool-proof locked cabinet that requires contacting 999 to obtain the access code. The cost is currently £1,670 plus VAT, plus £300 installation cost.

There will be some on-going maintenance costs. The pads need to be replaced every three years at a current cost of £85 plus VAT. However, if the pads are used for an emergency during this time, the ambulance crew that attend the incident will fit new pads. The battery life is approximately 4 years.

Mrs. McCash said that the Parish Council would need to decide where to locate the cabinet, which will require an electricity supply. She came up with three possible sites. The listed red BT box, the wall of the Bull public house and the Community Hall. She said that one problem with locating it in the listed BT box is that the electricity supply would need to come from the adjacent house.

After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed that the best location was the Community Hall.

Funding would have been available from the British Heart Foundation had we wished to have an internal unlocked system, this is not what we want, as it is to be available 24/7. There may be other funding sources, which Mrs McCash is to look into. It was agreed that funds could come out of either Parish Council or from the New homes Bonus funds, to assist with this purchase.

Mrs. McCash agreed to investigate funding for the defibrillator.

Action: H. McCash

- **Vandalism to bench**

Mr. Smith said that our insurers have agreed that we can claim to replace the sportsfield bench by the tennis court, which was destroyed by local vandals. A £125 excess will apply on our claim.

Mr. Knight said he had spoken to Michelle Hart, who donated the bench in memory of her husband Paul, informing her that the Parish Council will be replacing the seat. As the original seat was engraved, she will provide the Parish Council with a brass memorial plaque for the new seat.

Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Allotments**

There is still some allotment rent outstanding and reminder letters will be going out at the end of this week.

Action: J. Allsop

Mrs. Dinnin said she had anticipated that more allotment holders would be giving up their plots this year. She has already allocated one new plot and is arranging to show three other potential tenants the plots available.

- **The Lammas**

The trees and shrubs that were cut back along the Lammas riverbank in early 2015, in conjunction with the Liver Rivers Authority and Countryside Management Service project, have grown vigorously this year.

Mr. Smith suggest that these should be trimmed annually to be keep them in check and the Parish Council should not allow them to get into the state they were in before. This was agreed by Parish Councillors.

Mr. Smith suggested that this work can be done by a tractor strimmer for minimal cost and he would do the work in early spring. He said that as a second grass cut has not been required on the Lammas or Watton Green and he would therefore include the Lammas tree trimming in the price quoted by Blue Bury Contractors for the annual grass cutting works.

- **War Memorial cleaning**

Mrs. Dinnin said she met with Paul Reynolds on site at the War Memorial and he agreed to provide a quotation for pressure washing the stones and the base of the memorial for our meeting tonight, but has failed to do so.

Mrs. Dinnin to obtain a second quotation from Adam Welch

Action: C. Dinnin

It was agreed that this work should be done after the poppy wreaths have been removed.

- **Church walk**

Mark Blacktin has quote £420 to remove excess soil and grass along entire length of Church Walk to widen pathway. Mark Blacktin has agreed to include cutting back the path around the Community Hall at no extra cost. Mr. Smith said that he had thought about the use of a small digger to remove the excess soil along Church Walk, but this would probably damage the tarmac surface below.

Parish Councillors agreed to accept Mark Blacktin's quotation.

Action: M. Smith

- **Ornate village sign - post**

Mrs. Dinnin said that the Clerk e-mailed Glyn Mould, who carved the ornate village sign and provided the post it stands on, and he replied on 3rd November as follows.

“The post would need a light sand and the application of a Sadolin extra finish. You could choose the colour you require.

The original was possibly a Cuprinol chestnut colour finish. This is more a preservative finish with a matt finish.

I hope this is helpful.”

It was agreed to ask Mark Blacktin to quote for doing the work. The Parish Council to provide him with the Cuprinol, paintbrushes and sandpaper.

Action: J. Allsop

New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee

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

Refer to item 5 d Action points outstanding - Look at New Homes Bonus minutes before sending them to Parish Councillors.

Mrs. Stanley said that the deadline date for applying for funding from the New Homes Bonus funds is 25th November. She will arrange a meeting of the New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee after the deadline date and before the December Parish Council meeting.

Action: M. Stanley

b) Routine Reports

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

Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke to carry-out the emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests.

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**

Mr. Stock completed the report on 14th November and, apart from the War Memorial planting, reported the negative items only to the meeting.

- **War Memorial planting**

Mr. Stock is happy to see that the latest planting in the War Memorial garden is now well-established and is giving added colour to the site. He suggested that we now purchase some more evergreen shrubs to further fill some of the gaps/open spaces. This was agreed and Mr. Stock to purchase and plant suitable shrubs accordingly during the next month or two.

Action: D. Stock

- **Rainbow Multi play and slide**

Adjacent to the bench seat, there is a gap between a length of the concrete edging and the safety-surface. In addition there is a small hole (approximately 3 to 4 cms in diameter) in the safety-surface and some cracking at the base of the steps. Mr. Stock is concerned that if not repaired, these faults could cause the safety-surface to lift due to the ingress of frost and frozen water.

Mr. Smith to inspect the safety-surface and ask Mark Blacktin to carryout repairs as necessary.

Action: M. Smith

- **Allotments**

There are some early signs of encroachment at the entrance to the site and this needs to be monitored to ensure that it is dealt with before it becomes a problem. Mrs. Dinnin said that Adam Welch already has an action to cut down the tree and shrubbery at the entrance to the Allotments.

The condition of the allotments continues to vary from extremely well-kept to being in need of some urgent attention (e.g. it is disappointing to see well-worked allotments being next to weed-covered plots, and some plots look more like rubbish-tips than allotments).

While inspecting the site, an allotment-holder drew his attention to a hole in the allotment-site hedge near the gate onto Church Walk. Mr. Smith is aware of this and will take a look at the issue.

Action: M. Smith

- **The salt bin in Perrywood lane**

This is in very poor condition and needs attention. The Clerk to inform Hertfordshire Highways and ask them to replace the bin with a new one.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Litterbins**

The litter bins appear to be well-used and some were over-full at the time of inspection. Mr. Smith showed Parish Councillors pictures of various different-styled bins to replace the small ones in Mill Lane. It was then agreed to purchase three 50-litre Trimline bins (with metal-liners) from Glasdon at £135 each, excluding VAT. This price includes an 8% discount negotiated by the Clerk.

- v) **Weekly sportsfield**

Nothing to report.

- vi) **Website**

Nothing to report.

- vii) **Facebook**

No items were identified.

- viii) **Highway and Lighting faults**

Nothing to report.

9 Correspondence received

- i) **East Herts Council - Open Space, Sports and Recreation Assessment**

Mr. Smith said that he and Mr. Meischke had completed the assessment, which included open space areas within the parish. East Herts Council had included Woodhall estate land in the public open spaces and have not been informed that this is private land.

10 Village organisations

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

Mr. Stock is to attend the War Memorial Hall Management Committee's AGM and subsequent committee meeting tomorrow (16th November).

11 Items for Parish News

The following item has been submitted for inclusion in the February issue of the Parish News.

- Watton-at-Stone in bloom.

Action: M. Smith

The meeting closed at 2206

The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 13th December 2016.