

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 13th December 2016

Present:	Mr. Michael Smith (Chairman)	Mr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman)
	Mrs. Christine Dinnin	Mr. Denis Filer
	Mrs. Catherine Hammon	Mr. Ian Knight
	Mrs. Helen McCash	Mrs. Margaret Stanley (after 1945)
	Dr. Emma Waltham	Mrs. Jane Allsop (Clerk)
Police:	Sergeant Duncan Wallace and PCSO Karen Broad (until 1928)	
Public:	District Councillor Michael Freeman and County Councillor Ken Crofton	

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence: Mr. David Stock.

2 Public Participation

Sergeant Duncan Wallace updated the Parish Council on the crime figures for the period 1st November to today's date (13th December). There were nine incidents reported, two are non-recordable domestic incidents. These crime figures are almost a 42% reduction on same period since last year and include the following

- One domestic assault (offender is on police bail).
- One obstruction to an emergency worker. The woman involved said she could not move her car to let an ambulance past as she panicked while trying to reverse; the charges have since been dropped.
- One reported damage to a car, however this turned out to be dirt that disappeared when the car was cleaned.
- One theft from a vehicle. Satnav equipment was stolen.

There were no burglaries to dwellings reported.

The police have been focusing on rural risk on the build up to Christmas, with added evening cover around the farms.

The new Chief Constable of Hertfordshire, Charlie Hall, who came from a rural area in Norfolk, wants to encourage neighbourhood policing as the way forward in rural areas.

District Councillor Mike Freeman highlighted the problem of fly-tipping. Sergeant Wallace said that this problem is costing the county a lot of money. A recent fly-tip of 10 tankers worth of contaminated material cost Hertfordshire £150,000 of public money to clear up. In Essex there are large amounts of fly-tipping where 5-6 lorry loads of material are being dumped over one night on farmland. The urban areas bordering rural areas seem to suffer the worse.

PCSO Karen Broad asked if the Parish Council received a monthly police report and the Clerk confirmed that we did not get one. She said that a monthly police report should be going out to all Clerks and she would arrange for this to happen.

Sergeant Duncan Wallace and PCSO Karen Broad left the meeting.

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 15th November 2016**
Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved.

b) Review of actions

1. Pursue internet connection for Community Hall and School Lane area

Mr. Meischke said that Dr. Norden is trying to arrange a meeting with BT but so far without success. This item to remain on the agenda.

Agenda: 01/2017

c) Action points resolved

1. Ask Adam Welch to submit quotation for removing tree at entrance of the Allotments
2. Look at New Homes Bonus minutes before sending them to Parish Councillors
3. Contact local Parish Councillors about a designated PCSO
4. Meet to discuss way forward for Station Road project
5. E-mail all Parish Councillors a copy of the draft response to District Plan
6. Make comments on draft response to District Plan
7. Purchase new letter box
8. Notify Stuart McCash about his appointment as internal auditor
9. Arrange a meeting of the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee

10. Order tennis nets and winder mechanism
11. Ask Michael Lewis to unlock floodlighting meter box
12. Obtain quotation to cut back the Spanish Oak tree by the new tennis court
13. Inspect the football posts
14. Inspect condition of sportsfield grass
15. Investigate funding for the defibrillator
16. Send out allotment rent reminder letters
17. Accept Mark Blacktin's quotation for work on Church Walk
18. **Ask Mark Blacktin to quote for preservative treating the Ornate village signpost:** Outstanding.
Action: J. Allsop
19. Arrange a meeting of New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee
20. Carry-out emergency escape lighting test and manual alarm call tests
21. Purchase and plant suitable shrubs for War Memorial garden within the next month or two
22. Inspect play area safety-surface and arrange for repairs to be made as necessary
23. Inspect hole in hedge between Allotments and Church Walk
24. Ask Hertfordshire Highways to replace damaged salt bin in Perrywood Lane
25. Parish News article re 'Watton-at-Stone in Bloom' event

d) Action points outstanding

1. Obtain prices for a new Parish Council notice board

This item to be deferred to the February Parish Council meeting.

Agenda: 02/2017

6 Planning

Mrs. McCash reported on the following items.

a) Applications

i) Broomhall Farm (3/16/2540/LBC)

Change of use of barn from agricultural to office use. Creation of 8 new window openings, erection of internal free standing structure for insulation, form a new opening in an internal wall, install new internal partition wall, install glazed door and glazed screen in existing openings and demolition of lean-to structure

Mrs. McCash e-mailed all Parish Councillors (on 18th September) the correspondence for this application and suggested a 'no comment' response.

Parish Councillors endorsed this and the Clerk wrote to East Herts Council accordingly.

ii) Gregory's Farm (3/16/2497/FUL)

Change of use and alteration of Barn 4 to create 2 no. Holiday lets

Mrs. McCash e-mailed all Parish Councillors, on 18th September, the correspondence for this application, together with the following two applications (3/16/2498/FUL and (3/16/2500/FUL) and suggested a 'no comment' response for all three.

Parish Councillors endorsed this and the Clerk wrote to East Herts Council accordingly.

Mr. Freeman said that one of the Gregory Farm applications, which was refused by East Herts Council, has now gone to appeal. At the same time, the applicants have put in another application for holiday lets on this site. Mrs. McCash said that if granted, they could easily ask for a change of use in the future to residential dwellings and sell the property.

iii) Gregory's Farm (3/16/2498/FUL)

Change of use of Barn 1 and 2 to 2 holiday lets

Refer to planning application item 6 a ii.

iv) Gregory's Farm (3/16/2500/FUL)

Change of use and alteration to Barn 4 to create 1 no. dwellinghouse

Refer to planning application item 6 a ii.

v) Land adjacent to 8 and 10 School Lane (3/16/2728/NMA)

Non-material amendment to 3/16/1227/FUL - Hall window on SE elevation moved. Window to en-suite on SW elevation removed. Opening lights removed from glazed screen on ground floor SW elevation. Window to bedroom on NE elevation lowered. Louvres removed on SE and NW elevations. Minor alterations to window sizes. Slightly smaller bedroom windows to master bedroom.

Mrs. McCash said that this application is for minor changes to the window sizes and positioning to an already granted application. She suggested a 'no comment' response.

This was endorsed by Parish Councillors.

Mrs. McCash said that East Herts Council did not e-mail the plans for the above application to the Parish Council and it was our District Councillor, Michael Freeman, who forwarded them to the Clerk.

Mr. Freeman agreed to speak to the planning department asking them to ensure that all planning application are forwarded to the Clerk.
Action: M. Freeman

b) Decisions

None

7 Specific items

a) District Councillor Michael Freeman’s Report

Mr. Freeman updated Parish Councillors on the current situation re dog-fouling enforcement laws. EHDC have a number of additional steps that the Parish Council can consider now that the new enforcement regulations are in place. Notices containing those regulations have now been displayed around the village. Unfortunately, there are still some dog owners who choose to ignore them, but we are down to the last few percent and with a determined effort, we might even be able to get these to change their ways.

Mr. Freeman said that a lady had suggested that dogs are often walked by children who may not have been instructed to dispose of dog waste. If these children can be identified then the Dog Warden could make contact with their parents so the young dog walkers can be educated in dog waste disposal. The dog warden lives in Norfolk and can only make weekday daytime meetings.

Mr. Freeman suggested that the dog warden could also meet with the lady who is running puppy classes in the hall. The Clerk was uncertain if she would be interested in a meeting but agreed to ask her.

Mr. Freeman said that details of regular dog fouling ‘hot spots’ could be published in the Parish News, with the aim of making people aware that we are aware of the problem and that further action may follow. It would also involve us putting additional notices in those areas, and spraying the faeces to highlight the problem. EHDC will supply the paint and monitoring sheets as well as the additional signs.

Mrs. Stanley arrived at the meeting.

East Herts Council can also supply cards allowing residents to report incidents, without giving out their names, but naming the offender. Officers need to know where regular problems are occurring.

A school poster competition, encouraging responsible dog ownership, is currently underway.

East Herts Council are also encouraging local Parish Councils to take over responsibility of dog fouling enforcement although this may not land up as policy.

Mrs. McCash said there is a lot of dog mess in the graveyard and she would like some of the spray to highlight the fouling. Mr. Freeman agreed to provide her with some. **Action: M. Freeman**

Mrs. Hammon suggested that the dog warden could also visit Watton-at-Stone School. Mr. Freeman said he would ask the dog warden to make contact with Watton-at-Stone School. **Action: M. Freeman**

b) Parish Council’s response to the East Hertfordshire District Plan

At the November Parish Council meeting Mr. Smith had said that due to timescales we would need to speedily draft a response to the District Plan but that we should wait until the NP consultation had taken place

Cllr Hammon then advised the PC as to the NPs deliberations concerning the response pointing out that the Draft Plan as it stood not only caused uncertainty over what might be a fair number of houses but put the onus of releasing Green Belt squarely on the shoulders of the Parish Council. Furthermore, there is no legal precedent for a Neighbourhood Plan to be given this option. This being the case, and solely concerning Watton-at-Stone, we should question the Legality and the Soundness of the plan.

Mr. Smith said that the Parish Council need to respond to the District Plan by Thursday 15th December. It was agreed that the Parish Council should respond as per the attached document. **See attached**

It was agreed this document should be posted on the Parish Council website as well as on Facebook .

FOR NOTICE BOARDS AS FOLLOWS: The Parish Councils Response to the District Plan:

The PC accepts that there is a need for affordable housing and broadly agrees with the District Councils Draft Plan. However, the PC does take issue with the District Council concerning the methodology for releasing Green Belt land in Watton-at-Stone Parish which has been left to the Parish Council to decide through the Neighbourhood Plan. For more information please see media or contact Jane Alsop for hard copy.

Action: J. Allsop

c) Report on East Herts Village Hall and Community Buildings conference held on 2nd December

Mr. Smith said that he and the Clerk attended the East Herts Village Hall and Community Building conference. He said that there were a couple of interesting presentations; the campaign to end loneliness and from Norris and Fisher who offer free building valuations. He suggested that the Parish Council could consider having the Community Hall valued. Energy efficiency was another topic covered.

With reference to loneliness, County Councillor Ken Crofton suggested that welcome packs could be issued to new Watton-at-Stone residents.

d) Traffic along Station Road

In his absence, Mr. Stock asked the Chairman to read out the following report re the current situation concerning Station Road and the High Street.

“Further to the action point from our meeting in November I met with Mr. Smith and District Councillor Mike Freeman to discuss the on-going problems and delays associated with Station Road and the High Street.

As a result of the meeting and further to Mike Freeman’s correspondence with him, I wrote to Terry Douris (Herts County Councillor and Cabinet member for Highways), see attached. He replied immediately and referred me back to County Councillor Ken Crofton.

After much communication with Ken and the team at HCC I believe that we have reached a satisfactory outcome that avoids the need for a ‘complex’ reporting-chain. I have now re-established my direct contact with the HCC team (i.e. via Farid Tilavi and, in his absence, Bradley Joseph) who are willing to answer any questions and provide updates as necessary. For the sake of completeness and to avoid misunderstandings, Ken Crofton will be copied on all such communications. I see this as the most efficient and effective way of working and one that will enable us to be ‘kept in the loop’, and in a proactive way again.

- The updates that I received from Ken on 25 November and Farid on 28 November, each of which are on file, both said that the TRO for the proposed waiting-restrictions (i.e., single and double-yellow lines) was to be advertised in the Mercury on 1 December and that the civil-works are still scheduled for February 2017. The TRO is subject to a period of 21 days to allow for any objections to be received. The actual start date for the implementation of the waiting restrictions will depend on the processing of any objections received and is therefore not known at this point.
- I was informed by Bradley that he was on-site on 29 November placing TRO notices at ‘strategic points throughout the village’ to advertise the proposed traffic calming and parking restrictions. He is to monitor these site-notices and replace any that go missing.
- Further to the above, I requested and received confirmation from Bradley that the re-alignment of the footpath/crossing point in Station Road opposite the junction with Rectory Lane is still part of the programme of works.
- Farid has informed me that he has ordered two heritage bus-shelters and they are ready to be delivered on site when the works start.

Farid apologised for ‘the failure to maintain adequate communication with the Parish Council’ and said that ‘we are more willing and determined to complete the scheme on time’.

To date I have not received any indication, from anyone, as to what happens if any further delays take us into the financial year 2017/18.”

County Councillor Ken Crofton said that the S106 funds have been allocated to the Station Road and High Street plans. The only reason the projected might be delayed into early in the next financial year, will be if too many objections are raised to the proposed plans, which may require extra time to sort.

Mr. Smith expressed his gratitude to Mr. Stock for all the hard work he had undertaken to resolve the traffic problems in both Station Road and the High Street. Parish Councillors were in agreement with Mr. Smith’s statement.

e) Traffic along High Street

As for Station Road, see above.

f) Neighbourhood plan – progress report

This item was reported on directly after item 7 a, District Councillor Michael Freeman’s report.

Dr. Waltham gave her progress report to the Parish Council. She said that the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood plan consultation weekend on 26th and 27th November was a success and attended by about a quarter of all households in the village. To date approximately 80 completed response forms have been returned. These will be analysed after 7th January, which is the end of the six week submission period.

Dr. Waltham said that she, together with Mr. Freeman and Mr. Smith, met 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. It was a good meeting and East Herts Council are currently recruiting more officers to deal with the Neighbourhood plan applications, which will significantly reduce the turnaround time for processing applications from approximately two years down to about 9 months.

Dr. Waltham reassured Parish Council that the current policies give Watton-at-Stone quite a bit of protection from applications being submitted within the Greenbelt.

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>15.75</u>	Screwfix – Letterbox for Clerk	<u>39.99</u>
	15.75		39.99
Cheques issued			
AON	Additional insurance to cover new tennis court		134.97
Glasdon UK Limited	3 litterbins with metal liners		486.00
University College London	Tennis Court - Archaeological survey and report		2,802.00
Royal British Legion	Poppy donation		70.00
Chas Lowe	Paving slabs for tennis court path		339.84
Blue Bury	Groundworks around new Tennis Court		686.40
J. Allsop	Printing for Neighbourhood Plan consultation weekend		198.00
Wages and salaries	To December 2017		1143.58
Floodlighting Limited	4 x floodlighting columns for new tennis court		14,366.40
Debra Freeman	Mulled wine and mince pies		66.45
Glasdon UK Limited	Replacement seat – insurance claim		645.74
David Stock	B&Q plants for War Memorial		20.00
			20,959.38
Cheques received			
East Herts Council	S106 for tennis court		<u>38,000.00</u>
			38,000.00

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
Floodlighting to 30.11.16	140.00	HCC – cleaning materials	<u>44.51</u>
Forever Active – November 2016	310.00		44.51
Carla Beach – (4 weeks)	166.00		
Tony Silvestri – Pavilion (3 weeks)	30.00		
Clare Young – Main Hall	57.50		
Lindsay Ellis – Pavilion	72.00		
Rebecca Angel – Main Hall and Pavilion	46.00		
Dawn Nightingale – Pavilion hire	24.50		
Felicitas Dixon – donation for toy use	10.00		
Felicitas Dixon– Main Hall and Pavilion	<u>22.00</u>		
	878.00		
Cheques issued			
M K Windows	Repair high level windows - 3 head units (not 5)		<u>954.00</u>
RGS Flooring	Provide and install new flooring to external toilets		462.00
Mark Blacktin	Repair damaged area to meeting room floor		80.00
Wages	To December 2017		166.05
Kompan	Crazy Daisy repair kit		52.92
Collier Turf	2 Tennis Nets		309.60
Newitts	1 x tennis winder mechanism		<u>93.38</u>
			2117.95
Cheques received			
Clarke/McComb	Main Hall and Pavilion		51.00
Felicitas Dixon	Pavilion hire		14.00
East Herts Council	Grant for 10 chairs		172.53
Sports and Social Club	Hire of the Community Hall facilities		370.00
Peter Khera	Main hall hire		146.30
Felicitas Dixon	Main Hall and Pavilion		22.00
Youth Club	Main Hall and Pavilion		112.50
Mrs. Mothersdale	Pavilion		<u>44.00</u>
			932.33

Parish Councillors agreed the payments.

• **Approval of minutes of Budget and Finance Sub-Committee meeting held on 8th December 2016**

Parish Councillors who attended the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee meeting on 1st December approved minutes. Mr. Filer to sign a copy of the minutes.

Action: D. Filer

The following recommendations were approved.

• **Hire charges for 2017/18**

The Community Hall hire-charges to remain the same gross amount (i.e. gross including VAT regardless of the percentage rate).

• **The Sports and Social Club hire-charge for 2017/18**

The Sports & Social Club hire-charge to be increased to £3,000 (increase of £40)

Notify the Sports and Social Club accordingly.

Action: I. Knight

• **Floodlighting charges for 2017/18**

The floodlighting charges remain at their current level of £1 for 8 minutes for the double tennis court and the new single tennis court to be set at £1 for 14 minutes.

Mr. Meischke to alter the floodlighting timer accordingly.

Action: J. Meischke

• **Allotment rents for 2017/18**

The Budget and Finance Sub-Committee's recommendation was to increase the allotment rent from £25 per full allotment to £30 and from £12.50 for one-half of an allotment to £15.

After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed that the allotment increase should be £28 for a full plot and £14 for a half plot, with effect from 1st October 2017. The budget figures to be reduced by £50.

All Allotment holders to be notified accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

The Allotment water charges to be reviewed at the September 2017 Parish Council meeting, prior to the annual invoices going out on 1st October 2017.

Agenda: 09/2017

• **Various quotations**

Parish Councillors agreed that the following quotations be accepted, these are the same prices as quoted for 2016/2017.

• **Frank Cooper and Son Limited (dated 24th November)**

To gang-mow sportsfield (per cut) £59 (plus VAT)

Nick Whitehead – Sportsfield hedge cutting (verbal quotation) £400 (plus VAT)

• **Lammas and Watton Green grass-cut**

• **Blue Bury Contractors**

Blue Bury Contractors' quotation £1,320 (plus VAT)

For the following work.

- Cutting and removal of grass from both areas
- Secondary flail cut as necessary
- Trimming under trees
- Keeping boundary shrub incursion under control
- Trimming ditch and banks at Watton Green

• **Ted Brown** – has verbally quoted for the following work in 2017.

• Perimeter of sportsfield, around the MPPA, bike ramps and seats
 • and mow between MPPA and Church Walk hedge £90 per cut

• Cutting the grass where the gang mowers can't go from the gate, around the Community Hall to School Lane plus the weeding the Community Hall £40 per cut

• Pruning the Community Hall garden once a year £60

Write to all contractors who submitted quotations.

Action: J. Allsop

• **High Street maintenance work, leaf clearance, mowing and strimming work in the village**

Greenwood Tree Care (Adam Welch) – was awarded a three year contract (at £2800 per annum) commencing in 2015.

• **Employees and self-employed remuneration**

Parish Councillors agreed the following increases in the self-employed remuneration rates.

Ted Brown's self-employed remuneration increases from £8.35 to £8.45 per hour.

Rosemary Brown's self-employed remuneration increases from £8.10 to £8.45 per hour.

- **Budget 2017/18**

Mr. Filer went through the items listed in the Budget notes for the benefit of Mrs. Hammon, Mrs. McCash, and Dr. Waltham, who were not present at the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee meeting on 8th December.

Mr. Filer confirmed that all the figures included VAT where appropriate and then the VAT was recovered and shown as an income, a system that he had inherited on taking over responsibility for Budget and Finance.

Parish Councillors approved the budget figures with one amendment to the allotment rent income.

Approved budgets attached.

See attached

- **Precept 2017/18**

It was agreed that the provisional precept requirement for 2017/18 is £34,100.

The Clerk to notify East Herts Council accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Bank accounts**

Mr. Filer raised his concern that the Parish Council hold more than £75,000 of funds in the Santander accounts. After discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council should open an account with a different high street bank and deposit £50,000 in this new account.

Mr. Filer and the Clerk to investigate.

Action: D. Filer/J. Allsop

- **Appointment of the Internal Auditor**

Mrs. McCash to ask Stuart McCash to acknowledge his acceptance of his appointment as the internal auditor for the Parish Council.

Action: H. McCash

- **SLCC Annual membership**

The SLCC membership renewal for 2017 is £139, which is £10 less than in the 2016. Mr. Filer said that the membership, which is in the Clerk's name, provides the Parish Council with legal advice and useful information about changes in legislation, e.g. change in accounting practices. Although this information is also available from the Hertfordshire Association of Local Councils, their annual membership fee would be in the region of a thousand pounds. Parish Councillors agreed to renew the SLCC membership.

Action: J. Allsop

The Clerk said that for an additional £10, the Parish Council could add member of the new ALCC (Association of Local Council Clerks), which is run by SLCC. This membership is an independent trade union dedicated to supporting people working in the local council sector across England and Wales. Parish Councillors agreed not to take up this membership.

Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Meischke reported on the following items.

- **Toilet Door**

The toilet door has been repaired.

- **Floodlights**

The new floodlighting meter is now fully operational.

- **Decoration in Pavilion**

D. P. Electrics will alter the ceiling lightings in the pavilion, so they hang on temporary chains, on 22nd December. Mike Taylor is scheduled to start the decoration work on Tuesday 3rd December.

The new LED lighting will be installed after the decoration work has been completed.

- **Forever Active report**

The numbers attending the Forever Active programme are continuing to increase.

- **Internet connection**

Refer to item 5 b i, Review of actions - Pursue internet connection for Community Hall and School Lane area.

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

The parts required to repair the Crazy Daisy spinning pole have been received from Kompan.

Mr. Meischke and Mr. Smith to install.

Action: J. Meischke/ M. Smith

- **Path surrounding Community Hall**

Mark Blacktin has trimmed back the path around the Community Hall.

- **Christmas decorations**

It was agreed that Christmas decorations be purchased (i.e. Christmas tree, lights and babbles) when they are on sale after Christmas and stored in the loft ready for use in December 2017.

Action: J. Meischke

Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **Tennis Court**

The path leading from existing tennis courts to the new tennis court is now complete and the temporary white-lines have been installed on the new court.

Mr. Knight and Mrs. Dinnin to meet with Adam Welch re cutting back the Oak tree that overhangs the tennis courts.

Action: I. Knight/C. Dinnin

Mr. Knight said that the Parish Council should look at having the floodlighting equipment serviced on a regular basis. Floodlighting Limited can do this check for £510. A new bulb is also required for the large courts and would cost £240 to install. This includes £120 for the 2kw bulb, the remaining being installation and call out fees. It was agreed that as the double tennis court floodlighting equipment has not been serviced for several years that this should be done at the same time as installing the replacement lamp. This should reduce the overall cost by at least one call out fee. Mr. Knight to obtain a quotation from Floodlighting Limited.

Action: I. Knight

- **Sportsfield**

The problem with the loose goal post at the Community Hall end of the field will be resolved when new posts are purchased and installed.

Mr. Knight said that he and Mr. Smith will look at the condition of the sportsfield in spring and decide what action.

Action: M. Smith/I. Knight (March 2017)

- **Defibrillator**

Mrs. McCash said that she had managed to get a better price for the supply and installation of the Defibrillator, which will be £1,600. She said that she had been unable to obtain any other funding sources, as they are only available for defibrillators that are installed inside a building.

Parish Councillors agreed that Mrs. McCash should proceed with the purchase of the defibrillator, which will be located on the car park side of the Community Hall.

Action: H. McCash

Mrs. McCash and Mr. Meischke agreed to meet with D. P Electrics, when they are on site on 22nd December, to discuss the installation of a power source to keep the defibrillator batteries charged.

Action: H. McCash/J. Meischke

It was agreed that the defibrillator will be funded from Parish Council funds and not from New Homes Bonus fund.

- **Replacement bench**

A seat to replace the vandalised one has been purchased from Glasdon UK. AON have paid £413.12 towards the net cost of £538.12, leaving the Parish Council to pay the £150 excess. The VAT element will be reclaimed

Mr. Smith to arrange for the seat to be installed once all the groundworks around the new tennis court have settled down.

Action: M. Smith

Michelle Hart will provide a brass memorial plaque for the seat.

Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Allotments**

Mrs. Dinnin said that she had re-let four allotment plots, including one large one.

Jill Cox has designed an excellent Allotment plot vacancy poster, which have been put up on the notice boards and posted on Facebook.

- **War Memorial**

Mrs. Dinnin said that Paul Reynolds submitted the following quotation, by e-mail, on 23rd November.

“Memorial Paving - Cleaning

Thank you for making contact with your enquiry to clean the paving slabs around the memorial. Some small areas on the memorial itself to also be cleaned.

Price : £250.00 inclusive.

Price including goodwill discount for Watton-at-Stone village good cause: £75.00 inclusive.”

Mrs. Dinnin said that she had not asked Adam Welch.

Parish Councillors endorsed this decision and it was agreed to accept Paul Reynolds quotation, asking him to do the work after the Poppy wreaths are removed at the end of January.

Action: J. Allsop

Additional planting around in War Memorial Garden

Mr. Smith said that Mr. Stock has purchased and planted five new shrubs for the site.

New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee

• Report on meeting held on 8th December 2016

All Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of the minutes of the New-Homes Bonus Sub-Committee meeting prior to this meeting. Parish Councillors present at that meeting approved the minutes.

Mrs. Stanley said that the New-Homes Bonus Sub-committee had reviewed and discussed the applications in detail on 8th December. Their recommendation is that a total of £10,592 of grants be awarded to the following organisations (the individual awards are detailed in the minutes of the meeting).

- Scouts and Guides - £2550 (+260 max – tbc)
- Methodist Church - £760
- Ladies Football Club - £2520
- Men's Football - £1,502 (goal posts only)
- Cricket Club - £3,000

County Councillor Ken Crofton said that there might be other funding streams available from Hertfordshire Sports Partnership and asked Mrs. Stanley and the Clerk to e-mail him to request the details.

Action: M. Stanley/J. Allsop

After discussion, Parish Councillors approved the Scout and Guide and Methodist Church grant awards. The Parish Council agreed to pursue alternative funding streams for the Football Club and Cricket Club applications, and if they cannot find any alternative funding sources, the New Homes Bonus funds will be made available.

It was agreed that the Football Club items will remain the property of the Parish Council to enable the VAT element to be reclaimed.

It was noted that further discussion was needed with the Cricket Club to discuss their proposal in detail, ownership of the equipment and potential funding streams, including their application for funding from East Herts Council.

The Parish Council agreed to provide the Cricket Club with a letter supporting their East Herts Council application for grant funding to install bowling facilities on Parish Council land. **Action: J. Allsop**

All New Homes Bonus applicants to be notified accordingly.

Action: M. Stanley/J. Allsop

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.

Mr. Meischke said he had downloaded a HSE Health and safety checklist for village and community halls and suggested that check should be carried-out in conjunction with the six-monthly check. This was agreed by Parish Councillors.

iv) Monthly village-report

Mrs. Hammon completed the report on 11th December.

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

- **Litterbin at top corner of sportsfield** – is being used for dog fouling. Mr. Freeman said that the law now allows members of the public to deposit their dog-fouling remains in litterbins as well as the dog bins, provided the excrement is wrapped up in bags.
- **Post and rail fence** – needs repairing. Mr. Smith said that he would be arranging for the fence to be repaired soon. **Action: M. Smith**
- **Harry's bench** – front slat has split and is coming away. Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke to inspect and take action as required. **Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke**
- **Small swings** – rubber is coming away. This item to be monitored. **Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke**
- **Crazy Daisy** needs repairing. The missing parts have now been received and will be installed soon. **Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke**

• **Mill Lane**

- Rubbish has been dumped over the wall on the right hand side, downstream. Mr. Freeman agreed to investigate and report as required. **Action: M. Freeman**
- The dog bin is full, could we consider having another. Mr. Smith said he would arrange for the two large litterbins to be installed and this should help the situation.
- The disused Mill Lane site has some windows broken. Mr. Freeman said that East Herts Council have instructed the owner to board up any broken windows and doors and if they fail to do so, East Herts Council will arrange for the work to be done and invoice the owner accordingly.

• **War Memorial** – Mrs. Dinnin agreed to remove the small individual poppies. **Action: C. Dinnin**

• **River Beane** - Mr. Smith said that it would appear that Herts and Essex Wildlife Trust are now looking forward to proceeding with the River Beane project, including the notching the weir.

• **Church Walk** - Mrs. Hammon said the grass verges have been cut back at least as far as the gap in the hedge by the Tennis Courts, but she did not know if it had been cut back all the way up Church Walk. Mrs. Dinnin agreed to inspect and notify the Clerk if the work is complete. **Action: C. Dinnin**

• **Leaves** – there are an excess amount of leaves on the pavements in some areas of the village. Mrs. Dinnin asked Parish Councillors to notify her of any problem areas and she will inspect them and ask Adam Welch to clear if necessary. **Action: C. Dinnin**

Mrs. Hammon said how pretty the village was looking with all the Christmas lights.

v) **Weekly sportsfield**

Nothing to report.

vi) **Website**

Nothing to report.

vii) **Facebook**

No items were identified.

viii) **Highway and Lighting faults**

The following faults to be reported to Highways.

- Lamppost number 1 in Lammas road
- Station road – almost outside 33 crater in road

Action: J. Allsop

9 Correspondence received

None.

10 Village organisations

• **Scout and Guides**

Mrs. Dinnin said that she has been in regular contact with the Scout and Guide Group due to several of her grandchildren attending their different groups. She said it transpires that they would like a Parish Council representative on their committee and she volunteered to be that representative. This was agreed.

Parish Councillors agreed that this is a fantastic village organisation.

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
- Parish Council response to the District Plan.

Action: M. Smith

The meeting closed at 2150.

The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 17th January 2017.