

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 17th January 2017

Present:	Mr. Mike Smith (Chairman)	Mr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman)
	Mrs. Christine Dinnin	Mr. Denis Filer
	Mrs. Catherine Hammon	Mr. Ian Knight
	Mr. David Stock	Mrs. Margaret Stanley
	Mrs. Jane Allsop (Clerk)	
Police:	None.	
Public:	Stephen Block	

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence: Helen McCash and Dr. Emma Waltham

2. Public Participation

Mr. Smith welcomed Stephen Block to the meeting and asked if he had any specific interest. Mr. Block said he was interested in seeing how the Parish Council ran, with a view to applying to be a Parish Councillor when a vacancy arises.

3. Chairman's/Clerk's Report

• Agree meeting dates for the Civic Year 2017/2018

Mr. Smith said that this item should have been on this agenda and will now be included on the February 2017 agenda.

Currently the Parish Council meet on the third Tuesday of the month (with the exception of August when they do not meet). He asked Parish Councillors to consider holding the first meeting in the new Civic Year on the 4th Tuesday, namely: 23rd May instead of 16th May. All dates to be approved at the February Parish Council meeting.

Agenda: 02/2017

Prior to the February Parish Council meeting, the Clerk to e-mail all Parish Councillors the dates for the third Tuesday in the month, with the exception of the May meeting which will be the 4th Tuesday.

Action: J. Allsop

The Clerk said that, in liaison with Mr. Meischke, she had agreed that the meeting room could be hired out on Tuesday evenings for Spanish lessons. The booking is on Tuesday evenings during April, May and June and would affect the start time of Parish Council meetings by 15 minutes, from 1915 to 1930.

This arrangement was endorsed by the Parish Council.

Parish Councillors agreed to trial starting meetings at 1930 instead of 1915 from May 2017 onwards.

- Police report** – all Parish Councillors have been e-mailed a copy of PCSO Karen Broad’s police report and apology for being unable to attend this meeting.

4. Declaration of Interests

None.

5. Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

• Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 13th December 2017

Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved with the following amendment.

Final paragraph of item 7 a, District Councillor Mike Freeman’s Report - Heath Mount School to be changed to Watton-at-Stone School as follows.

“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.”

b) Review of actions

- 1. Speak to the planning department re e-mail planning application**
Refer to item 6 a, Specific items - District Councillor Mike Freeman’s Report.
- 2. Provide Mrs. McCash with dog fouling highlighter spray**
Refer to item 6 a, Specific items - District Councillor Mike Freeman’s Report.
- 3. Ask dog warden to arrange a visit to Heath Mount School**
Refer to item 6 a, Specific items - District Councillor Mike Freeman’s Report.
- 4. Investigate new bank account for the Parish Council**
Refer to item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee - Bank accounts.
- 5. Investigate rubbish dumped in Mill Lane and report as required**
Refer to item 6 a, Specific items - District Councillor Mike Freeman’s Report.

6. Notify allotment holders of price increase

Mrs. Dinnin said that she and the Clerk could not decide if the allotment holders should be notified of the price increase now or in the new financial year (1st April 2017). Parish Councillors agreed that notification letters should go out in April 2017. This action point to be included on the April 2017 agenda.

Agenda: 04/2017

c) Action points resolved

1. Post Parish Council response to the district plan on website and Facebook
2. Sign a copy of the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee minutes dated 08/01/2016
3. Notify the Sports and Social Club of hire charge increase
4. Alter new floodlighting timer
5. Write to all contractors who submitted quotations
6. Notify East Herts Council about provisional precept requirement for 2017/18
7. Ask Stuart McCash to write re acceptance of appointment as the internal auditor
8. Renew the SLCC membership
9. **Purchase Christmas tree and decorations in New Year sales**
Mr. Meischke said that he obtained a 50% discount of the purchase of a Christmas tree and lights. These are now being stored in the loft of the Community Hall.
10. Meet Adam Welch re cutting back the Oak tree that overhangs the tennis courts
11. Obtain quotation from Floodlighting Ltd for replacing bulb and serving floodlights
12. Purchase defibrillator
13. Talk to D. P Electrics re power source to keep the defibrillator
14. **Arrange for new seat to be installed by tennis courts**
Refer to item 8 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee - Installation of replacement memorial bench.
15. Accept Paul Reynolds quotation for pressure washing around the War Memorial
16. Ask Ken Crofton for details of funding streams available from Hertfordshire Sports Partnership
17. Provide letter of support to Cricket Club re their EHDC grant application
18. Write to all New Homes Bonus grant applicants
19. Carry-out emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests
20. Arrange for the sportsfield post and rail fencing to be repaired
21. **Inspect Harrys bench and take action as required**
Refer to item 8 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee - Installation of replacement memorial bench.
22. Inspect small swing seats
23. Repair Crazy Daisy spinning pole and hammock swing
24. Remove the small individual poppies around the War Memorial
25. Inspect Church Walk to see if grass verges have all been cut back
26. Ask Adam Welch to do additional leaf clearance where required
27. Report Highways faults online
28. Submit two articles to the Parish News before 12th January

d) Action points outstanding

1. Ask Mark Blacktin to quote for preservative treating the Ornate village sign post

Mark Blacktin has provided a quotation of £70 to lightly sand the post and apply a coat of a Sadolin extra finish. All materials to be provided by the Parish Council.

Parish Councillors approved the quotation. Mr. Smith to notify Mark Blacktin accordingly.

Action: M. Smith

6. Planning

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

a) Applications

i) Mulberry House, 27 High Street (3/16/2837/HH)

Single storey rear extension

Mrs. McCash asked Mrs. Stanley to oversee this application, because the homeowners are clients and friends of hers.

Mrs. Stanley said she had visited the neighbouring properties at 25 and 29 High Street, who had no objections to the plans. However, she was unable to make contact with Bruce Allison (of 24 Lammas Road), whose property is at the rear of 27 High Street. It was agreed to put a copy of the planning protocol letter through Mr. Allison's door, asking him to make contact with Mrs. Stanley if he so wishes.

Mrs. Stanley suggested a 'no comment' response from the Parish Council. This was endorsed by Parish Councillors. The Clerk to write accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

b) Decisions

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
- East Herts Council – granted

ii) Gregory’s Farm (3/16/2497/FUL)

Change of use and alteration of Barn 4 to create 2 no. Holiday lets
- East Herts Council – refused

iii) Gregory’s Farm (3/16/2498/FUL)

Change of use of Barn 1 and 2 to 2 holiday lets
- East Herts Council – refused

iv) Gregory’s Farm (3/16/2500/FUL)

Change of use and alteration to Barn 4 to create 1 no. dwellinghouse
- East Herts Council – refused

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.
- East Herts Council – granted

7. Specific items

a) District Councillor Mike Freeman’s Report

All Parish Councillors have been e-mailed a copy of Mr. Freeman’s report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. **See attached**

• Dog Fouling

It was agreed that an article about the dog-fouling regulations would be included in the next issue of the Parish magazine. The article will highlight the current problem areas and state that some dog fouling will be highlighted with a yellow spray marker, which may shame the offenders. Mr. Filer said that there is a big problem of fouling in the churchyard.

Mr. Filer said that he had read our current canine faeces byelaws for the sportsfield and was not happy at the role the Parish Council is expected to take. Mr. Smith said he and Mr. Freeman were working together to update these byelaws. **Action: M. Smith**

Parish Councillors approved Mr. Smith suggestion of purchasing dog-waste bags and a dispenser for approximately £100. Mr. Smith to give the details of these items to the Clerk so she can purchase them. **Action: M. Smith/J. Allsop**

• Heritage site

Mr. Smith read from Mr. Freeman’s report concerning Heritage sites. ‘I have sent a report to the Chairman asking if the Parish Council can assist in identifying any heritage sites, items etc in our Parish which may need to be added to the “At Risk” Register so that I can pursue this with EHDC officers. If anyone is aware of such sites or objects, please let me know.’

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

A copy of the Parish Council’s response to the East Hertfordshire District Plan has been uploaded to the Watton-at-Stone website and the link has been posted on the Parish Council’s Facebook page.

c) Traffic along Station Road

Mr. Stock gave the following update re Station Road and the High Street.

I attended a site meeting in Station Road on Friday 13 January 2017 to discuss objections raised by a Hazeldell resident about the proposed schemes for both Station Road and the High Street. In addition to myself and the resident concerned, District Councillor Mike Freeman, Bradley Joseph (HCC) and Farid Tilavi (HCC) were also in attendance.

As a result of this meeting the resident withdrew his objections related to Station Road but not to the High Street.

I contacted Bradley Joseph yesterday (Monday 16 January) and as a result am able to report as follows.

- The published period for comments and objections expired on 9 January.
- There are no objections outstanding re Station Road.
- Further to the site-meeting and because of objections/comments outstanding re the High Street, Bradley and Farid are to review the current scheme within the next few days together with Neil Richardson (the Sponsor at HCC). Bradley will keep me informed accordingly.
- It was confirmed that the recently published road-closure TROs are for the Station Road and High Street works to be carried out.
- Work on both schemes is scheduled to start on 20 February.

- Ringway will send notifications of the works to those residents directly affected. This will also be published on HCC’s website.
- If any changes are made to the High Street scheme as the result of comments/objections received, then the revised plan will need to go through the whole TRO procedure again.
- I have been assured by Bradley that in the event of delays to the implementation of the High Street scheme, the works in Station Road will go ahead as planned (i.e., the two schemes would be ‘de-coupled’).
- It is clear that we need to monitor commuter-parking issues after the implementation of the Station Road scheme. Also, it is accepted that parking problems within the village need to be addressed.

Mr. Stock to send a copy of this report to County Councillor Ken Crofton.

Action: D. Stock

d) Traffic along High Street including mini roundabouts

As for Station Road, see above.

It was agreed not to pursue the issues concerning the mini-roundabouts until the other schemes had been completed.

e) Neighbourhood plan – progress report

Mrs. Hammon said that the second consultation period ended 7th January. The Steering Group are next meeting on 18th January to discuss the results.

Woodhall Park Estate will be presenting their plans for development in the village on 25th January. Mr. Smith said that all Parish Councillors were welcome to attend.

f) Defibrillator

Mr. Meischke said that the Defibrillator had been purchased and was currently stored in the internal storeroom at the Community Hall.

At the November Parish Council meeting, Parish Councillors agreed to site the Defibrillator at the Community Hall. Mr. Meischke suggested that it should be located between the toilet doors and the storeroom (decommissioned toilet) door and D. P. Electrics would tap into the external toilets power source.

Mr. Smith said that he personally thought that the Defibrillator would be better located near the village shop. It would be much more accessible to the wider public in this area and regular users of the Community Hall and sportsfield would be aware of its High Street location. After discussion, it was agreed to investigate further installing the Defibrillator in the High Street, either by the shop or in the vicinity of the Bull Public house.

Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke

g) War Memorial inspection

Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke will do the inspection of the War Memorial, which will now be included on the 6-month inspection, in the next few days.

Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke

h) Internet connection

Mr. Meischke said that the Parish Council received an e-mail from Chris French, a resident of the Gatekeeper Meadow development, who stated that Barratt Homes decided not to negotiate with Virgin Media when building the Gatekeeper Meadow development and therefore they only have standard copper wiring for phone and internet.

Mr. Meischke spoke to Chris French and suggested he attend the Sir Oliver Heald MP surgery on Sunday 14th January, however he was unable to attend.

8. Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

Mr. Filer reported on the following items concerning the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee.

- **Monthly accounts**

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty cash - Payments	
None		None	
Cheques issued			
Mark Blacktin	remove grass and soil on Church Walk and around Com Hall		420.00
Mark Blacktin	install new footpath to new tennis court		450.00
Clive Bell			60.00
Bidwell LLP	1/2 year Allotment Glebe rent		335.00
Wages and Salaries			1101.83
Adam Welch	trim back hedge by Allotments		180.00
Post Office Limited	Tax and NI		175.61
J. Allsop	BT phone call - July - December 2016		65.19
Mrs. McCash	Defib Store – Defibrillator and accessories		1944.00
Society of Local Council	Annual subscription		139.00
			<u>4870.63</u>

Cheques received		
Crawford & Co	AON insurance claim re bench	<u>413.12</u>
		<u>413.12</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
Floodlighting to 17.01.16	60.00	None	
Carla Beach – (4 weeks)	156.00		
Tony Silvestri – Pavilion (2 weeks)	20.00		
Clare Young – Main Hall	30.00		
Forever Active 154.00	154.00		
Tjen Martin	58.50		
Catherine O’Hara – Main Hall	8.00		
Summer	<u>10.00</u>		
	<u>496.50</u>		

Cheques issued		
Total Contract Cleaners	Hall cleaning in November 2016	120.00
East Herts Council	Rates	129.00
E.ON	Gas	171.92
E.ON	Electricity	71.19
Total Contract Cleaners	Hall cleaning in December 2016	90.00
J. Meischke	Christmas tree purchased in sales	174.50
J. Meischke	Christmas lights purchased in sales	39.98
Wages	Cleaning	141.75
M. Taylor	Decoration of the Pavilion (part of £1600 quotation)	1,300.00
J. Wight	Decoration of the Pavilion (part of £1600 quotation)	<u>300.00</u>
		<u>2,538.34</u>

Cheques received		
Dave Boddy	Main Hall	185.00
Chloe Teoli	Main Hall	743.85
Watton Ramblers	Meeting room	5.00
Badminton Club	Main Hall	171.00
Wendy Ansell	Main Hall	60.00
Georgina Duggan	Main Hall & Pavilion	52.50
Felicita Dixon	Pavilion hire	<u>14.00</u>
		<u>1231.35</u>

Parish Councillors agreed the payments.

• **9-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 9-monthly statement of accounts for the period ending the 31st December 2017.

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 taking into account the cost of building the new tennis courts; he was not unduly concerned in the variations of these nine-monthly figures.

• **9-monthly inspection of accounts**

Mrs. Stanley said she had completed the 9-month inspection of accounts and would give the Clerk a signed copy of her report, for inclusion in the 2016/17 accounts. **Action: M. Stanley**

• **Precept 2017/18**

At its December 2016 meeting, the Parish Council agreed that the provisional precept requirement for 2017/18 is £34,100. Mr. Filer proposed that the Parish Council now formally agreed this figure and the Precept form is duly signed. This was agreed by all Parish Councillors.

The completed precept form to be returned to East Herts Council.

Action: J. Allsop

• **Bank accounts**

The Clerk said she had been in contact with the Clerks from Tewin, Datchworth, Walkern and Benington Parish Councils. Three of them bank with Barclays. The Walkern Parish Council Clerk reported that she is very frustrated with Barclays in their dealing re a change of bank signatories.

Datchworth Parish Council have used the Unity Trust bank for the last couple of years. There is a monthly service charge of £6 on the current account but no charges on a deposit account. The Datchworth Clerk

finds the online bank account 'extremely' easy to use. However, she stated that the one downside was that they do not have a debit card facility. They do have a credit card, but there is a monthly charge for this.

Mr. Filer reminded Parish Councillors that the Parish Council is currently not allowed to have a credit or debit card for their accounts. The Clerk to find out from SLCC if there has been any changes on these regulations.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Meischke said he would contact Lloyds bank.

Action: J. Meischke

Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Meischke reported on the following items.

- **Annual Charity Return**

The Clerk to submit the Annual Charity Return for the year ended 31st March 2016, with amendments identified by Mr. Meischke.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Toilet Door**

Mr. Meischke said that he was meeting with D. P Electrics to ask them to quote for installing a time-controlled magnet lock for the external toilets.

There continues to be a problem with the locking of these toilets. Mr. Meischke said unfortunately he had also left them unlocked following opening them up to allow a member of public to use them and then forgotten to lock them afterwards. The following morning the toilet roll holder in one of the toilets and the soap dispenser were broken with the soap cartridge missing. There was also rubbish and excess amounts of toilet paper down the toilets and wetted toilet paper thrown all over the place

- **Decoration in Pavilion**

The decoration work in the Pavilion has been completed and looks very good. D. P. Electrics need install the new LED lighting.

D. P. Electrics have been asked to quote for replacing the broken emergency light in the main hall and replace three other strip lights that are no longer working. Mr. Meischke suggested that whilst they have a scaffolding tower on site, all of the Main Hall lighting could be changed to low wattage strip lighting. Parish Councillors agreed that Mr. Meischke should obtain a quotation from D. P Electrics.

Action: J. Meischke

- **Forever Active report**

Mr. Meischke said that the numbers attending the Forever Active programme are very good for Table Tennis, Carpet Bowls and Archery.

However, Tai Chi and Yoga numbers continue to be low. Mr. Meischke suggested that numbers might improve if the classes are held on a different day of the week.

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

Mr. Meischke said that he had repaired the Crazy Daisy spinning pole with the parts provided by Kompan.

The Clerk to give Mr. Meischke the details for altering the Crazy Daisy hammock swing, which the annual playground inspection report identified as not having enough ground clearance.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Meischke to alter the height of the hammock swing if required.

Action: J. Meischke

- **H&S Policy**

All Parish Councillors have been e-mailed a copy of the draft H&S (Health and Safety) Policy drawn up by Mr. Meischke and Mr. Stock.

Mr. Meischke has received some comments from Parish Councillors. Mrs. Hammon handed Mr. Meischke her comments on the documents. Mr. Meischke to amend as necessary and e-mail the revised document to all Parish Councillors.

Action: J. Meischke

- **Fire Risk Assessment**

Mr. Meischke said he was in the process of updating the fire risk assessment and plan. **Action: J. Meischke**

The note at the bottom of the evacuation procedure document on the website needs amending to state that there are no public telephone boxes available within the village.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Hire agreement**

Mr. Meischke said the hire agreement has been updated to include references to the H&S policy and the fire risk assessment. This will be issued to hirers once the H&S policy and fire risk assessment has been adopted.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Six-monthly checks**

The 6-month check page headed "Equipment in Community Hall" now includes the inspection of the fire exit signs & lights, fire exit doors, fire extinguishers and smoke alarms.

The War Memorial has also be included on the 6-month check on the page headed "Bench seats and War Memorial".

- **Cleaners**

Mr. Meischke said that Hayley Hargood of Total Contract Cleaners e-mailed the Clerk today as follows.

“We are reviewing contracts at the moment, and unfortunately we are unable to continue with the hall. The general state of the hall each week requires more than the time allowed and is not cost effective for us, we also find it difficult to find staff for a once a week job.

Please take this as notice that we will finish on Monday 30th January.”

The Clerk has e-mailed Mrs. Hargood back asking her if an increase would be of interest to them continue to clean the Community Hall facilities.

Mr. Meischke said he had already spoken to Carla Beach to find out if she would be interesting in cleaning the hall. However, due to her working hours at the village shop she is unable to help out, but said her daughter may be interested.

Mrs. Dinnin said she might have the names of several cleaners that would be interested in doing the work. She agreed to either contact them or give their details to Mr. Meischke. **Action: C. Dinnin**

Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **Tennis Court**

Adam Welch needs to cut back a couple of branches that are overhanging the tennis courts.

Mrs. Dinnin to chase. **Action: C. Dinnin**

The Tennis Club would like the new tennis court to remain closed until the permanent lining is installed in spring. This was agreed by Parish Councillors.

Mr. Knight said he would like the far (i.e., 2nd) gate to the double tennis-courts to remain locked.

Mr. Meischke and Mr. Stock disagreed with this and said that the gate must remain open to enable an alternative exit from the facility, e.g., to provide a possible escape route in the event of bullying and thus help to avoid a child being trapped. Parish Councillors agreed that the gate must remain unlocked.

Mr. Knight said he had obtained a quotation from Sports Courts of £625 (plus VAT) for pressure washing the double tennis courts because they are very slippery due to the build-up of moss and debris.

Mr. Meischke said that the work needs to be done as soon as possible as it is dangerous in its current condition. Parish Councillors agreed to accept Sports Courts quotation and Mr. Knight to arrange for the work to be done as soon as possible. **Action: I. Knight**

This item to be funded out of Community Hall’s contingency budget.

Mr. Knight said that the double courts have not been used much recently because Ian Vosper has not been coaching for personal reasons.

Mr. Knight said that he had obtained the following quotation (dated 15th December 2016) from Floodlighting Limited.

“Visit by Service Engineer’s purpose of a Clean and Service, On No.2 Courts. This Includes, using the Scaffold Tower to gain access to the Floodlight’s for the purpose of Cleaning of the Glass and reflectors on the Floodlights.

Also, a check of all Control-gear at bases of Columns and a check of the Distribution board to ensure that it is in all good working order.

To Include a Lamp replacement.

Labour: £480.00

Mileage: £30.00

To Supply and Installation of:No1: Lamp Type: MT2000BH-L @£120.00per

Total £630.00 plus VAT

Parish Councillors approved the quote. Mr. Knight to contact Floodlighting Limited accordingly.

Action: I. Knight

This above to be funded out of Community Hall’s contingency budget.

Mr. Knight said that the Tennis club want to buy a screen, which they will pay for, to go between the double tennis court and the single one, so that players are not distracted during matches. Parish Councillors agreed to this on the provision that they do not remain up after the matches have finished on any particular day.

Concern was shown that the new £1 coin, due to come into circulation in March 2017, may not fit our floodlighting coin machines. Mr. Knight suggested that we should hold back a supply of £1.

- **Sportsfield**

Mr. Knight said that he and Mr. Smith would look at the condition of the sportsfield in spring and decide what action. **Action: M. Smith/I. Knight (March 2017)**

- **Installation of replacement memorial bench**

Mr. Knight said he had sorted out the positioning of the new seat and he would liaise with Mr. Smith about its installation. **Action: I. Knight/M. Smith**

Mr. Knight to ask Michelle Hart to provide a memorial plaque approximately 4” long by 2” wide.

Action: I. Knight

Mr. Smith said he had inspected Harry’s bench, which is located between the two conifer trees at the far side of the sportsfield, and would arrange to replace the broken slat. This seat, because of its location, gets covered in bird droppings. It was agreed to contact Harry’s family suggesting that the seat is relocated away from the trees, but in the same general area of the sportsfield. **Action: C. Dinnin**

Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Lammas bank – Steps**

Mrs. Dinnin said that somebody had reported that the steps on the Lammas slope were dangerous. She visited the site and found that they are unsafe. She phoned Tom Goldsmith, (CMS) who gave her the contact details of one of his colleagues, who Mrs. Dinnin will meet on-site to discuss a CMS volunteer working group repairing them. **Action: C. Dinnin**

- **Herts and Middx Wildlife Trust**

Mr. Smith said that he and Mrs. Dinnin had met with David Johnson from Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust. Also present were Charlie Clark, Mike Freeman and Bob Thornton. Unfortunately, nothing has altered about the status of the Lammas section of the River Beane. The planned upgrades, including the installation of baffles, will not take place until the owner of the Mill Lane building gives his permission for the work to go ahead. The owner is most unlikely to do this until he receives planning permission for the Mill Lane site and the Environment Agency will not notch the weir without the Mill Lane site owner’s permission. Added to that East Herts will not move on the planning issues for this site.

- **War Memorial – 6 month inspection**

Refer to item 7 g, Specific items - War Memorial inspection.

New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee

- **Funding for sports equipment**

Mrs. Stanley said that County Councillor Ken Crofton e-mailed her on 20th December with the details of funding sources for football grants (namely: Herts Football Association) and Cricket grants (namely: Hertfordshire Cricket Ltd). Mrs. Stanley raised the question, with hindsight, about whether it was appropriate to ask applicants to pursue other sources of funding as these grants had already been approved from NHB funds.

Mr. Stock, who was not present at the December Parish Council, expressed surprise that at this stage the Parish Council was seeking external funding sources and thought that it had been agreed that match funding would be part of next year’s grant applications and not this year. After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed that they would not pursue external funding sources for the football goal posts and floodlighting requirements. Instead, as agreed previously, they will fund both of these items from the New Homes Bonus funds and notify the Ladies and Men’s Football Clubs accordingly. **Action: M. Stanley/J. Allsop**

The Cricket Club has been unsuccessful in its application for funding from East Herts Council and will now be applying to Hertfordshire Cricket Limited, and any other sources available for the remainder of the funding required for the project. The NHB grant would remain available, and the Cricket Club would be asked to come back to the Parish Council with their proposals once the additional funding was secured.

Mrs. Dinnin agreed to relay this to the Cricket Club.

Action: C Dinnin

b) Routine Reports

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

Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke have carried-out the emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests.

- 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.

- Weekly reports - Fire Inspection and shower tests**

Nothing adverse to report.

The Accident report book is now located beside the First Aid box in the main entrance.

iv) **Monthly village-report**

Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke completed the report on 11th December. Mr. Smith reported the adverse items highlighted in the monthly village-report.

- **Sportsfield** – muddy but good: no sign of dog fouling.
- **Community Hall** – some mud from footballers on wall.

Mr. Meischke said that the Community Hall had been left in a terrible state one weekend. Mr. Knight agreed to speak to the Football Club about this incident and inform them that they will be penalised if this happens again. **Action: I. Knight**

- **Allotment**

- Entrance, beech hedge fence failing.
- Paths between allotments are higgledy-piggledy but serviceable.
- Uncultivated allotments – state of decay, some rubbish.
- Cultivated allotment – excellent.

- **Salt bins** – Hazeldell bin needs topping up. **Action: M. Smith**

- **Footpath 17** – one dog fouling deposit.

- **Litterbins** – the open-top dog bins were full of water and some had dog waste bags in them.

- **War Memorial** – Poppy wreaths to be removed at the end of January. **Action: M. Smith/C. Dinnin**

v) **6-monthly check**

Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke completed the report on 11th December. Mr. Meischke reported on the adverse items highlighted in the 6-monthly check.

- **Double courts**

Lots of leaves on the surface. Ted Brown has been instructed to clear.

The moss on the double courts surface is very bad. Refer to item 8 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee –Tennis Courts.

The wooden kicker board on the far gate is degrading and needs removing. Inspect and remove as required. **Action: I. Knight/M. Smith/J. Meischke**

Adam Welch is actioned to cut back the Oak tree overhanging the tennis court.

Mrs. Dinnin to chase. **Action: C. Dinnin**

The grass seeding around the far side of the new tennis courts has taken very well. Some grass seed must have blown onto the new court because grass is growing on its surface. Mr. Smith to inspect and take action as required. **Action: M. Smith**

- **Play area**

Several areas of the safety surface under the large swings needs repairing. It was agreed to ask Mark Blacktin to repair with the safety surface repair kit. Some adhesive is needed to facilitate the repair and Mr. Smith has this on order. **Action: M. Smith**

The swing seats and chains are nearing the end of their serviceable lives.

- **Community Hall**

The tables and table trolley in the Pavilion are showing signs of wear and the Parish Council could consider replacing some of them.

The new LED lighting is on order and due to be installed soon.

- **Benches**

The bench at the Northern end of the High Street near the bus stop needs replacing. However, a bus shelter is due to be installed soon in its place.

Harry's bench has a broken slat that is repairable and the seat is covered in bird excrement.

Mr. Smith to arrange for the seat to be repaired. **Action: M. Smith**

Refer to item 8 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee - Installation of replacement memorial bench.

vi) **Weekly sportsfield**

Ted Brown has weeded around the Community Hall.

vi) **Website/Facebook**

Mr. Meischke said that the re-design of the current website needs to be put on the February Parish Council agenda under Specific items. In the meantime, he agreed to speak to Dr. Waltham, who had previously agreed to look at this for the Parish Council.

Action: J. Meischke
Agenda: 02/2017

viii) **Highway and Lighting faults**

The following faults to be reported to Highways.

- Report footpath sign down on bypass and upload picture to the HCC faults website. **Action: J. Allsop**
- Pothole at road edge of lay by opposite the Bull Public House door. **Action: J. Allsop**
- Write to Ken Crofton to ask why Highways contractors did not complete resurfacing School Lane. **Action: M. Smith**

9. **Correspondence received**

None.

10. **Village organisations**

• **War Memorial Hall**

Mr. Stock said that the following report was missed from the December 2016 Parish Council minutes.

He attended the War Memorial Hall Management Committee AGM and subsequent committee meeting, both held on 16th November. No major issues were raised and the current financial health of the 'hall' is in good shape. Mr. R. Abel Smith said that the Trustees continue to be happy with how well the War Memorial Hall is being managed by the committee.

The following were elected during the AGM:

- Chairman: Mrs. Helen McCash
- Treasurer: Mrs. Pam Filer
- Secretary: Mr. Peter Doolan
- Bookings Secretary: Mrs. Christine Grant

11. **Items for Parish News**

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

- **Dog fouling** **Action: M. Smith**

The meeting closed at 2130.

The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 21st February 2017.