

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 18th July 2017

Present:	Mr. Mike Smith (Chairman)	Mr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman)
	Mr. Denis Filer	Mrs. Catherine Hammon
	Mr. Ian Knight	Mrs. Helen McCash
	Mr. David Stock	Dr. Emma Waltham
	Mrs. Jane Allsop (Clerk)	
Public:	None	

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence: Mrs. Christine Dinnin and Mrs. Margaret Stanley.

2. Public Participation

None

3. Chairman's/Clerk's Report

Mr. Smith said he had two additional items

- **Dogs on lead signs** – refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Dog fouling.
- **Common land at Whempstead** – refer to item immediately following 8 b viii, Routine reports – Dog fouling report.

4. Declaration of Interests

None.

5. Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 20th June 2017**
Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved.

b) Review of actions

- Investigate purchasing or making a large boot scraper**
Mr. Smith said that he had made a portable boot scraper, which when in use, will be sited on the newly concreted pad at the car park corner. The main costs involved are approximately £48 for brushes.
- Source brackets to lock goal posts to Cricket Shed**
Mr. Smith said he had sourced brackets to hang the goal post cross-bars from and the Football Club can install these on the Cricket shed.
- Monitor tree growth at 1 Hazeldell re foliage overhanging the footpath and take action if required**
Mrs. McCash said that the residents of 1 Hazeldell have cut back the overhanging tree growth.
- Contact Bradley Joseph re parking issues on the High Street**
Refer to item 7 c, Specific items – Traffic along High Street, including the mini roundabouts.
- Ask County Councillor Ken Crofton to fund seat installation in bus shelter opposite the Bull**
Mr. Crofton was unable to help.
Refer to item 7 c, Specific items – Traffic along High Street, including the mini roundabouts.
- Produce a list of items/problems/issues arising re the High Street, arrange meeting for early autumn**
Mrs. Stanley was not present at the meeting to report on this item. **Action: M. Stanley**
- Pursue adoption of BT kiosk**
Mr. Smith said the consultation period for the Parish Council's request to adopt the Grade II listed redundant red British Telecom phone box and use it to house our defibrillator ends on 19th July. He will make the formal application to adopt the phone box and apply for its change of use. **Action: M. Smith**
- Inspect the Willow trees on the Lammas and trees on Lammas bank**
Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee – The Lammas.

c) Action points resolved

- Inspect War memorial re cleaning and talk to Paul Reynolds if required
- Attend site meeting with Bradley Joseph (HCC) and District Councillor Freeman on 28th June
- Raise issues concerning the High Street with Bradley Joseph at meeting on 28th June
Refer to item 7 c Specific items – Traffic along High Street, including the mini roundabouts.
- Contact Hertfordshire CCTV Partnership Ltd
- Support the Friends of Rowner Lane in objecting to appeal re Gypsies at Dane End
- Contact neighbours of the Old Coach House, 11 Rectory Lane re planning application

7. Write to EHDC planning department re Old Coach House, 11 Rectory Lane
8. Obtain quotation for fencing at the back of the new tennis court and behind the play area
9. Arrange for the gap in the hedge between Church Walk and the sportsfield to be cut back
10. Obtain a quotation from Mark Blacktin to make some steps out of sleepers on the tennis court slope
Need to obtain quote mark on holiday
11. E-mail long Long-term capital expenditures list to Mr. Smith, Mr. Meischke & Mr. Filer for updating
12. **Update Long-term capital expenditures list and e-mail revised list to all Parish Councillors**
Mr. Filer said that he had asked the Clerk to distribute the Long-term capital expenditure list to all Parish Councillors via e-mail, asking them to update the list and forward it back to him. To date, he has only received updates from Mr. Meischke and these had been approved by Mr. Knight and Mrs. McCash. He asked all Parish Councillors to look at the updated document and make further additions if required.

Action: Parish Councillors

Agenda B&F

- This item to be discussed at a meeting of the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee.
13. Order two sets of drop-in caps for the goal post sockets and a spare cap in each size
 14. Contact Claytons about the costs involved in applying a Deed of Waiver on the sportsfield deeds
 15. Put a notice about dog fouling in the next issue of the Parish News
 16. Ask Adam Welch to trim the recently vacated allotment plot & invoice the previous tenant accordingly
 17. Remove the gate from the Allotments to Church Walk and block up the gap in the hedge
 18. Inspect the Willow trees and the trees on the Lammas bank
 19. Send Scout and Guides NHB grant cheque
 20. Remove old bike dumped by the dustbin at the Mill Lane entrance to the Lammas
 21. Arrange for Blue Bury contractors to trim the nettles on the Lammas
 22. Inspect playground sign in School Lane
 23. Inspect High Street bench near Mill lane and Harry's bench on the sportsfield
 24. Put notice on Facebook page asking owners to keep their dogs on leads whilst on the allotments

6. Planning

Mrs. McCash reported on the following items.

a) Applications

None.

b) Decisions

i) 16 Glebe Close (3/17/0981/HH)

Single storey extension

EHDC – permission granted

ii) 59 Rivershill (3/17/0869/HH)

Installation of French doors at rear to replace existing window

EHDC – permission granted

Mrs. McCash said that we received the following planning decision after the July agenda went out.

- **Old Coach House, 11 Rectory Lane (3/17/1224/HH)**

Proposed single storey rear extension

EHDC – permission granted

7. Specific items

a) District Councillor Michael Freeman's Report

District Councillor Michael Freeman was unable to attend the meeting and e-mailed the following report to the Clerk on 16th July.

“Apologies for this Tuesday - I have a full Council meeting same evening.

Main items this month:

1. I attended the Govia/Thameslink event at Hertford North last Wednesday. They confirmed once and for all that Watton Station is NOT closing. I have asked them to come to a public meeting here in Watton to explain all the issues around the additional platform at Stevenage, replacement bus services etc. They agreed to do this and I await dates etc. I will be at a meeting on Wednesday where EHDC and HCC will formulate a joint response to the latest timetable consultation.
2. I have started funding/grants enquiries re CCTV and will keep you informed.
3. I have worked with Cllr Stock on a number of Highways issues, especially around the High Street. I will leave Cllr Stock to update the meeting but would recommend that a complete list of all defects is compiled and sent to Highways, copy to Mr. Crofton, as an evidence of just how bad the performance has been in this regard.
4. Routine matters- grass cutting, hedge clearing, tree work, bin collections, all dealt with as required.
5. Dog Fouling. I am taking informal action with the owner of a dog I witnessed fouling the sports field last week and if necessary will escalate this. I remain disappointed that some Parish Councillors are unwilling to help in monitoring/reporting instances of dog fouling and would appeal to you all to give me some help in this matter.”

b) Station Road update

On Wednesday 28 June Mr. Stock and District Councillor Mike Freeman had a site meeting with Bradley Joseph (HCC) to discuss various issues and problems concerning the Station Road and High Street schemes. Further to this meeting Bradley Joseph informed Mr. Stock that corrective/work outstanding (e.g., sealing joints in the tarmac, tree work around the lamppost at the entrance to Hazeldell, reworking the grass verges, the complete rebuild of the traffic-calming components in the carriageway) will be carried out when Ringway return to Station Road to undertake the remedial tasks. The timing of this depends on the granting of the permit to close Station Road (again). Road closure is necessary because the speed table adjacent to the junction with Hazeldell is to be removed and a new one installed, as is the case with the two speed-cushions and centre-line marking near the railway station; because we are told of the unsatisfactory nature of the original works.

Mr. Stock said that bearing in mind all of the work put into the Station Road scheme over an extensive period (i.e., years) and the disruption caused during its initial implementation, it is unsatisfactory that we still do not have an acceptable and completed result, and are unable to establish when the works outstanding are to take place. After reminding the meeting of the problems and frustrations that we are encountering, he asked for the views of the Parish Councillors present. After some discussion, it was unanimously agreed that we write to the Leader of HCC and Ken Crofton to express our concerns and about the quality and way in which the works were carried out, the time taken so far and the problems encountered. Mr. Stock was asked to prepare a letter accordingly.

Action: D. Stock

Having established a good working relationship with Bradley Joseph, Mr. Stock was sorry to report that Bradley is moving on and as from 21 July will no longer be involved with Station Road and the High Street. This responsibility will rest with Farid Tilavi who has now returned to work. Mr. Stock felt that this was bad timing for us but hoped that Farid will be made fully aware of recent events and the current situation so that we can avoid having to go over old ground.

c) Traffic along High Street, including the mini roundabouts

Mrs. Stanley was not present at this meeting and was therefore unable to give report on her action point.

However, Mr. Stock did report on the following items concerning the High Street discussed during his site meeting with Mike Freeman and Bradley Joseph (HCC); refer to a) above.

- The incorrect waiting-restriction notices have still not been replaced with the correct versions. Mr. Stock had reminded Bradley that the completion of this simple task is urgent from our point of view because of the problems and confusions being caused and resultant parking issues being experienced. We are told by HCC that the timing of the installation of the revised signs is down to the contractor and would be done in due course. Some Parish Councillors expressed their concern that the signs were not visible enough and also that there should be more of them. Although he had discussed this point with Bradley, he felt that this could be raised again as part of the action point for Mrs. Stanley and Mrs. McCash (below).
- Further to his action point from last month, Mr. Stock discussed the subject of the missing bollard(s) from the High Street scheme and was subsequently informed that Bradley could not find any record of the proposed bollards but “if there is a perceived problem with vehicles mounting or parking half on the footway then this should be reviewed as considered as part of a post-completion scheme assessment”. The Clerk sent Bradley our copies of the HCC drawings and minutes which show and agree the inclusion of at least one bollard. Mr. Stock said that we already appear to have such problems (refer to the minutes of our May meeting) and Mrs. Stanley and Mrs. McCash have an action point outstanding to raise parking issues with HCC, and that this would be a good time to pursue the bollard issue further.

Action: M. Stanley/H. McCash

- One item of good news arising from the site meeting is that a seat has now been fitted to the bus shelter opposite to the Bull. Because this was an oversight, this was arranged by HCC and the supplier and at no cost to us.

Refer to Station Road update above re our dissatisfaction with the on-going problems.

d) Neighbourhood plan – progress report

Dr. Waltham said that the Steering Group have met a couple of times since her last report to the Parish Council.

She said that she had attended a first meeting with Vanessa Adams, AECOM consultant, on 29th June and they showed him around the village and identified Green Belt sites for potential release. AECOM will be looking at each Green Belt site (field) to individually assess its potential development and not the Green Belt as a whole. Members of the Steering Group then met at the Community Hall to discuss the options with Vanessa Adams. AECOM don't usually do this type of work so they have to be internally checking the process at each stage. This is affecting the timescale for completion of their report, which now looks as though it will be after the end of September.

Following Mrs. Hammon's lead, after she attended the HAPTC run seminar on Neighbourhood Plans in May, the Steering group have been progressing the plan by doing other things unrelated to the Green Belt issue. They have been concentrating on their vision and objectives statement for village. Dr. Waltham said she hoped to finish the draft statement by the end of next week ready for their next meeting on Tuesday 8th August.

Mrs. Hammon said it is the Steering Group's intention to present the vision and objectives statement to the interested members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group to get them to help shape the statement further.

The Steering Group had hoped to have the Neighbourhood Plan drafted by the end of the year, although still possible, it looks unlikely that this will happen as someone still needs to be employed to write the plan and grants will be need to be applied for to pay for this work.

Dr. Waltham said if the Neighbourhood Plan don't make the decision on Green Belt release and it is handed over to the District Council, they will use all the evidence based material obtained by the Steering Group to make their decision. She said that our village is a test case because it is the first time a local neighbourhood has been given the opportunity to make this change. If successful they could see themselves on national news.

Whilst Watton-at-Stone is protected by the Green Belt, no planning applications can be submitted on any Green Belt sites within the Parish.

Mr. Meischke asked Dr. Waltham and Mrs. Hammon to express the Parish Council's thanks for all the hard and time-consuming work the Steering Group are undertaking to put the Neighbourhood Plan together.

e) Defibrillator/kiosk adoption update

Refer to item 5 b 7, Review of actions Pursue adoption of BT kiosk.

f) Update on land adjacent to telephone exchange in the High Street

Dr. Waltham said that a member of the Steering Group, who is a developer, requested an ecological survey on the land adjacent to the telephone exchange. The survey has been done, however, the report has not yet been received.

g) CCTV

Mr. Meischke said that he, Mr. Smith and Mr. Stock had another meeting with Mike Reed (Operations Manager, Hertfordshire CCTV Partnership Ltd) who demonstrated what we could expect from a single camera system. If a single camera is used to scan the Community Hall and sportsfield area it could be 15 minutes before it gets back to its starting point. They agreed that this option was not acceptable and that a 4-camera system would be better suited. One camera would point down the streetlighting pole to protect it and the other three could be either fixed or moving and their usage changed as required. One suggested option was two fixed cameras one on the car park area and the other on the play area with the final camera scanning the remaining areas. A quotation for a 4-camera system is still awaited but it is anticipated that it will be in the region of £6000 plus. This will include a spoke collar to protect the camera unit from vandalism.

Mike Reed has confirmed that the height of the streetlight pole is correct for the 4-camera system and all images are evidential quality including infra-red night images at 65 meters. Areas as far as the tennis court can be zoomed in on to obtain footage.

A decision on the purchase and installation of a CCTV system to be discussed by Parish Councillors after receipt of the revised quotation. This item to remain on the agenda until further notice.

h) Bench in memory of Jeff Monk

Report from Mrs. Dinnin:

"Maureen Monk and family would like the Parish Council to purchase for them the Glasdon Elmwood seat at £564 + VAT and they would like it put on Watton Green, on road edge/bank near Mr. Filer's entrance to the stables, if that is ok."

This seat will be in memory of Jeff Monk and the family will be donating it to the Parish Council.

Mrs. McCash said that Mick Monk's family are also considering purchasing a seat for the village.

Mr. Smith expressed concern about too many benches on Watton Green and the associated problems with grass cutting around the benches and clearing rubbish left by users. Maureen Monk's link with the Watton Green area was recognised by Parish Councillors

Mr. Smith suggested that those wishing to donate a seat to the village could chose to replace one of the existing old concrete seats. Mr. Smith agreed to speak to Mrs. Dinnin about the Jeff Monk memorial seat and

Mrs. McCash said she would talk to Mick Monk's family.

Action: M. Smith/H. McCash

i) Date for the September Parish Council meeting

Mr. Smith said that there are at least 5 Parish Councillors who will be unable to attend the September Parish Council meeting if it is held on Tuesday 19th September.

After discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council's next meeting will be held on Tuesday 5th September.

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 rent	15.75	BT phone calls – April to June	35.56
	15.75		35.56
Cheques issued			
Mark Blacktin	Install concrete base between 2nd access tennis court Gates		270.00
Mark Blacktin	Install sleeper and hand rail by tennis courts		160.00
Mark Blacktin	Paint disabled sign in car park		120.00
Watton Methodist Church	NHB grant for Methodist meditation garden		965.00
Mark Harrod	- ground caps re goal posts		71.26
CDA for Herts	Annual subscription		35.00
CPRE	Annual subscription		36.00
Wages and Salaries	June/July 2017		1151.86
Post office	NI contributions £75.06 Clerk - £86.31 PC		161.37
Marmax	Rainbow picnic bench		520.80
Adam Welch	1/2 season maintenance work		1,200.00
Adam Welch	Clear fallen tree branch on the Lammas		75.00
Concord Trophies	Engraving of 2 perpetual trophies and 2 keep-sake trophies		60.88
Blue Bury Contractors	Watton Green and the Lammas grass cutting		1,134.00
Bidwells	Allotment Glebe rent		335.00
			6,296.17
Cheques received			
Sports & Social	Hire of facilities		375.00
			375.00

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
Carla Beach – (4 weeks)	166.00	Gibbs and Dandy - sealant	6.00
Tony Silvestri – Pavilion (4 weeks)	40.00	HCC – cleaning material	45.72
Forever Active	258.00		51.72
Donations for toy use	6.00		
Floodlighting to 18/05/17	60.00		
Paul Sparks – Main Hall & Pavilion	144.00		
Sara Sawetz – Main Hall & Pavilion	90.00		
	764.00		
Cheques issued			
Wages	June/July 2017		381.68
Herts Fire Protection	Annual inspection		59.94
James Turner Ltd	Supply and fit: secondary pump and new water heater		1,122.00
HCC	Cleaning materials		22.61
			1,586.23
Cheques received			
Badminton Club	Main Hall hire		142.50
Dixon	Main Hall and Pavilion		22.00
Stichbury	Pavilion hire		28.00
Dixon	Main Hall and Pavilion		22.00
Watton School	Pavilion hire		101.50
Dixon	Main Hall and Pavilion		22.00
Watton Youth Club	Main Hall and Pavilion		153.00
Dave Boddy	Main Hall hire		150.00
East Herts Council	Pavilion hire		128.00
Sports and Social Club	Hire of facilities		375.00
COIF	Deposit bank account interest		1.23
Dean Capon	Hire of Hall		80.00
Badminton Club	Main Hall		128.50
			1353.73

Parish Councillors agreed the payments.

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

Mr. Filer went through the first quarter's income and expenditure items for the Parish Council and the Community Hall accounts. He said that the first-quarter accounts are not a good reflection of 25% of the year's income and expenditure. For example, the Precept is paid twice a year, representing 50% of the total income and seasonal expenditure items such as grass cutting do not occur during the winter months.

The Community Hall's Main Hall hiring is just below 70% of the total annual budgeted figure and the pavilion figures are just above the 30% total annual budgeted figure. He said that the income will be considerably lower in the 2nd quarter due to fewer lettings during the summer period. Although it is expected that the income for the Community Hall will comfortably exceed the budgeted figures, the current level of income will depend on how new current hirers sustain their classes.

- **3-monthly inspection of the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts**

Mr. Filer said that Mrs. Stanley carried-out the three-month inspection of the Parish Council and Community Hall account on 17th July and they were in good order.

A copy of Mrs. Stanley's reports are included in the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts for 2017/18.

- **BDO – audit**

Mr. Filer said that BDO e-mailed the Clerk asking for information concerning the 2016/17 audit. They requested evidence on the S106 grant received during that year and details on the sale of the Parish Council land at Rivershill. The Clerk has sent BDO a detailed response and we now await their response.

Mrs. McCash said that, in her dealings with other Parish Councils audits, she noted that BDO had been getting very strict about the sale of land and had in some cases requested that a District Valuer assess the value of a parcel of land already sold off by a Council to check that it was not being undersold.

The Clerk said that although the Parish Council did not have their land at Rivershill valued prior to its sale, they had obtained a valuation 9 years ago, which was for £10,000 less than the amount achieved at sale.

- **BT Phone line**

Parish Councillors approved the payment of the Clerk's BT line rental, which is a one-off payment of £208.80p (one-month free line rental for payment in advance). In addition, the Parish Council will continue to pay for the BT unlimited anytime calls and the answer 1571 service.

The Clerk left the meeting while Parish Councillors discussed her salary under 'exclusion of press and public'.

Parish Councillors agreed the following changes to the Clerk's salary package.

- Increase in the number of paid hours per month from 70 to 74, to reflect the additional work carried-out for the Community Hall.
- Increase in home working allowance from £29 to £31 per month.
- Contribution of £11 towards monthly mobile phone bill.

The Clerk returned to the meeting

Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Meischke reported on the following item.

- **Annual Fire equipment inspection**

Herts Fire Protection have carried out the annual inspection of the fire equipment.

- **5- year electrical inspection, yearly emergency lighting inspection and PAT testing**

Mr. Meischke to arrange for D. P. Electrics to carry-out the electrical inspection, emergency lighting inspection and PAT testing.

Action: J. Meischke

- **Carpet in Main Hall**

Mr. Meischke said that the carpet rolls in the Main Hall, used to protect the hall when non-sporting events are being held, had consisted of one double width roll (two sections taped together) and two single width ones. The large roll has proved to be very difficult to roll up and therefore has been untapped. There are now 4 narrower sections of carpet which are easy to manage.

Mr. Meischke said that the carpet is used on a regular basis by both Archery and the Bounce classes. It was recently used by the Woodhall Estate for their public exhibition in May and is also used for casual hirers.

- **Water heater**

The new kitchen water heater has been installed (refer to June 2017 Trustees minutes, item 11 - Kitchen water-heater and shower pump).

- **Toilet**

The replacement locks have been purchased and installed in the external toilet blocks (refer to June 2017 Trustees minutes, item 5 - External toilet).

Mr. Meischke said that James Turner Limited were quick to respond to a problem with one of the external toilets, which turned out to be a broken flush unit. This has now been replaced.

- **Repairs to equipment on the Children's Play area**
Mr. Meischke has applied mastic to the safety surface at the children's play area to prevent it coming apart.
- **Hirer request**
Chloe Teoli, who runs the 'Bounce' trampoline classes, has asked if she can run her class on the sportsfield in hot weather. Parish Councillors agreed the request.

Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **Tennis Court/MPPA**
Sports Courts are scheduled to repair the joint between courts and to look at the surface of the new court. A small section of the surface has lifted during the recent hot weather lifting the painted surface.
- **Sportsfield**
The sportsfield is looking good.
The Youth Football teams will use the portable floodlights during their practices sessions.
Mr. Meischke was disappointed at the way the battery packs had been left in a jumbled heap with the cables all intertwined on the external cupboard floor. This is expensive kit which the Parish Council presumed would be taken diligent care of. Mr. Meischke and Mr. Smith to talk to the Ladies Football Club about the storing of the floodlighting battery packs. **Action: J. Meischke/ M. Smith**
- **Cricket nets**
Mr. Smith said that the Parish Council has been struggling with trying to reduce the costs of the Deed of Waiver required to have the cricket net runs along the sportsfield boundary with former Glebe House. The legal fees will be in the region of £1,000 with an additional £500 cost from the Diocesan board for agreeing the Deed of Waiver. Parish Councillors agreed that it was too expensive to pursue this matter further.
- **Quotations for fencing behind the new tennis court and behind the play area**
The following quotations have been obtained for fencing behind the new Tennis court and also fencing behind the play area to the gap in the hedge.
 - **Jarratt Fencing**
 - Supply and install adjacent to hedging behind play area
69mts of new 1.2mt high close board fencing, constructed with 1.05mt vertical overlapping featheredge boards, clad to 2 x horizontal timber arris rails set on 150mm concrete gravel boards, supported by 100x100mm morticed concrete posts at 2.4mt centres £3342.01 plus VAT
Alternatively: Supply and install 38 x 3'6" high x 6' wide premade close-board panels set on 6" concrete gravel boards supported by slotted concrete posts £ 2615.32 plus VAT
 - Supply and install post and rail fencing behind new tennis court
42mts of 1,2mt high post and 3 rail fencing constructed with 3 x horizontal 3.6mt x 87mm x 38mm timber rails, clad to 125x75mm full weathered timber posts concreted into ground the at 1.8mt centres £818.71 plus VAT
 - **All Type Fencing**
 - Supply and install adjacent to hedging behind play area
69 metres 5ft close board panels on 12in concrete gravel boards and concrete posts. all post concreted 600mm into ground £5109.00 plus VAT
Or
69 metres 3ft close board panels on 12in concrete gravel boards and concrete posts. all post concreted 600mm into ground £4695.00 plus VAT
 - Supply and install post and rail fencing behind new tennis court
45 metres post and rail fencing to run alongside of tennis courts – all posts concreted 600mm into ground £1,501.00 plus VAT

After discussion Parish Councillors agreed to accept Jarratt Fencing's quotation to supply and install post and rail fencing behind the new tennis court. **Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke**
Parish Councillors to look at the hedging behind the play area along its length to the gap in the hedge, and discuss at their September meeting whether to cut the hedge on a more regular basis or install fencing.
Agenda: 09/2017
All Type Fencing to be notified that their quotations were not accepted. **Action: J. Meischke/J. Allsop**

- **Cars on field**

The Parish Council received the following e-mail from Dr. Norden on 7th July.

‘May I bring to the formal attention of the Parish Council the ease with which cars can drive onto the Playing Field adjacent to School Lane.

We noticed, for the first time in some 20 years that cars, including an SUV, had been driven on to the Playing field yesterday for a Picnic.

While of itself this may be trivial, it demonstrates how easy it is for cars to get on to the Playing Field.

All they need do is to climb over the single-sleeper-type barrier in the car park adjacent to the Community Hall. I suspect that even these sleepers could be easily moved.

The real concern is if a large number of cars/vans/campers did this, In the current setup this could be done fairly easily.

I recommend that the Parish Council reviews this matter urgently and considers how to make access to unauthorised vehicles very much more difficult.

Thank you for bringing this to the attention of the Parish Council.’

Mr. Knight said that he gave permission for the vehicles to go on the field because they were setting up equipment for a tennis club social event. As the sportsfield was very dry, there was little or no risk to the surface being damaged.

Parish Councillors agreed that vehicles may only be allowed access to the sportsfield with the direct permission of a Parish Councillor. Also, as there has not been any problem with unauthorised vehicles going onto the field, no action is required to increase the barrier between the car park and the sportsfield at this time.

- **Dog fouling on the sportsfield**

Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee – dogs on lead signs.

Environment Sub-Committee

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

- **Allotments**

Mr. Smith read from Mrs. Dinnin report as follows.

‘2 plots were strimmed and I am showing someone round this Saturday and if they decide to take it on we will charge them a £50 deposit, When Adam submits his bill for this clearance work we need to send a proportionate bill to previous tenant.

That will leave one person on list so suggest we leave decision about advertising in Parish Mag until October when we will have had the renewals by then.

- **Dog fouling**

Mr. Smith said that there is an ongoing problem of dogs fouling on both the allotments and the sportsfield. In the defence of dog owners who fail to pick up their dog fouling, he said it is sometimes very difficult for them to see where their dogs have fouled if they are on the opposite side of the field.

To reduce the dog fouling problem, Parish Councillors agreed that the Clerk purchase five signs with a combined message of ‘please pick up after your dog’ and ‘all dogs to be kept on leads’.

Action: J. Allsop

Mrs. McCash to give the Clerk the details of the signs she obtained for the Churchyard from Amazon.

Action: H. McCash

- **Lammas**

Reference an e-mail from Mr. Smith dated 28th June, the Willow trees on the Lammas adjacent to the Mill site are huge and several limbs have fallen previously, but within themselves so to speak. The easiest thing to do is nothing as their removal would cost thousands. The trees are solid and not likely to fall down except perhaps as storm damage.

Mr. Smith said that Blue Bury Contractors have cut the grass and removed the grass cuttings from both the Lammas and Watton Green. Mrs. McCash said that both sites are looking good.

- **War Memorial**

Mrs. Dinnin has e-mailed Paul Reynolds several times re the pressure washing of the War Memorial. He has been notified of a water source he can use. Mrs. Dinnin to chase.

Action: C. Dinnin

- **Oak Tree on the Meadow**

The Parish Council submitted an application to EHDC for the removal of dead branches from the Oak tree beside the MPPA (double tennis courts) because it is covered by a TPO.

East Herts Council replied to our application, via e-mail, on 10th July as follows.

‘The application has been assessed by our temporary arboriculture officer Tracy Clarke and she has asked we let you know that you do not need to apply to remove dead wood from a tree in a conservation area or covered by a preservation order. However, you should only remove the dead wood; any other works above and beyond this would still require the standard application.’

After no further estimates were received, the Clerk e-mailed all Parish Councillors obtaining their agreement to proceed with Adam Welch’s quotation of £340 to dead wood the Oak tree. Adam Welch plans to do the work on 3rd August.

New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee

Nothing to report.

b) Routine Reports

i) 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.

ii) Gas and electricity meter readings

The Clerk to e-mail either Mr. Meischke or Mr. Smith, at the end of each month, to ask them to take the gas and electricity meter readings. **Action: J. Allsop**

iii) Weekly reports - Fire Inspection and shower tests

Nothing adverse to report.

iv) Monthly village-report

Dr. Waltham completed the report on 16th July.

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

- **Litter** – a little on the sportsfield.

It was agreed to gradually change the current post mounted litterbins for hooded ones.

- **Bike ramp area on the sportsfield** – there is broken glass embedded in the grass where one of the bike ramps used to be. Mr. Meischke to ask Ted Brown to remove the glass. **Action: J. Meischke**

- **War Memorial** – The garden needs weeding. Mrs. Dinnin to inspect and instruct Adam Welch accordingly. **Action: C. Dinnin**

- **Village Pump** – the area around the pump needs weeding. Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke to inspect. **Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke**

v) Weekly sportsfield

Nothing to report

vi) Website/Facebook

None.

vii) Highway and Lighting faults

None.

viii) Dog fouling reports

Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Dog fouling.

- **Common land at Whempstead**

Mr. Smith said that HCC have looked at the issue of the areas of common land at Whempstead which has been fenced off or enclosed by hedging by the land owner. One plot of common land is in the ownership of the Old Chapel and the other, 1 Homeleigh Cottages. Mr. Smith suggested that the Parish Council write, in the first instance, reminding them of their legal responsibility to keep this Common Lane open to the public by removing all fencing and hedging and suggest that they could apply to have the land deregistered.

Mr. Smith read out a letter he had drafted, which Parish Councillors agreed should be sent to both the Old Chapel and the other, 1 Homeleigh Cottages. **Action: M. Smith**

- **Trial bikes**

Trial bikes have been riding around the Woodhall estate without permission over the past weekend, the drivers have been given a warning by Nick Fox to cease doing so. The Woodhall estate will be putting up appropriate signs forbidding the use of trial bikes or similar vehicles on their land.

9. Correspondence received

None.

10. Village organisations

- **Forever active**

Mr. Meischke said he had met with Nigel Farren (Forever Active Project Coordinator, East Herts Council) re the current activities running at the Community Hall. It was agreed to put up the session rates from £2 to £3 on 1st August. The funding of coach support will only be paid for by East Herts Council for a limited time and when removed the cost will need to be borne by those attending the sessions. A gradual increase in the session rate will begin to meet these charges.

It was agreed to gauge the interest for indoor Walking football sessions. A notice has been placed on Parish Council's Facebook page and the Forever Active members who have provided us with e-mail addresses have been notified by e-mail.

Some of the Table tennis members are starting up their own league and the main hall facilities will be used to hold once fortnightly tournaments on Friday evenings, alternating with the Youth Club. There may also be the opportunity for the league members to teach the Youth Club members.

11. Items for Parish News

No items were identified for inclusion in the July 2017 issues of the Parish News.

The meeting closed at 2120.

The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 5th September 2017.