

## Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018

<b>Present:</b>	Mr. Mike Smith (Chairman)	Mr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman)
	Mrs. Christine Dinnin	Mr. Denis Filer
	Mrs. Catherine Hammon	Mr. Ian Knight
	Mrs. McCash (until 2125)	Mrs. Margaret Stanley (after 1924)
	Mr. David Stock	Dr. Emma Waltham
	Mrs. Jane Allsop (Clerk)	
<b>Public:</b>	Sergeant Duncan Wallace (to 1935)	
	District Councillor Michael Freeman (from 2020 to 2107)	
	Mrs. Louise Casey and Mrs. Claire Corrin (to 2015)	

### 1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence: None.

### 2. Public Participation

Mr. Smith asked Louise Casey and Claire Corrin is there was any specific items they wished to discuss with the Parish Council. Louise Casey said they wanted to find out what the Parish Council are doing to eradicate the dog-fouling along the footpath 17, along the school boundary and generally around the village.

This item to be discussed under Specific items – Dog fouling.

Mrs. Casey and Mrs. Corrin will be invited to speak during the discussions.

### 3. Chairman's/Clerk's Report

Mr. Smith said that Dog fouling will be reported on under Specific items.

### 4. Declaration of Interests

None.

### 5. Minutes of the last meeting

#### a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2017**  
Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved.

#### b) Review of actions

1. **Obtain quotations for fencing around the double tennis courts**  
Refer to item 8 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee -Tennis court – wire netting replacement.
2. **Install defibrillator in kiosk**  
Refer to item 7 e, Specific items - Defibrillator/kiosk update.
3. **Install solar powered light when the defibrillator is installed in the kiosk**  
Refer to item 7 e, Specific items - Defibrillator/kiosk update.

#### c) Action points resolved

1. **Ask Councillor Freeman to observe and report on traffic movements at the site of the speed-cushions**  
Mr. Stock said that Councillor Freeman carried out speed-monitoring in Station Road and informed him that speeds were slightly lower than those recorded during the period of the previous on-street parking adjacent to the Gatekeeper development. (Obviously, you would expect drivers to slow down when they see the monitoring equipment and people in high-vis clothing.)  
Councillor Freeman agreed with the Parish Council's view that the new speed-cushions near the Station have very little/no effect on vehicles and are thus a waste of time and money. Sergeant Wallace agreed that these speed-cushions are not effective.
2. **Contact HCC to establish the duration of the before-and-after survey on Station Road**  
Mr. Stock said that to date HCC had not addressed this question.
3. Add footpath crossing-point at the bottom of the 'Hockerill slope' to list of High Street issues
4. Upload a copy of the Parish Council's CCTV data protection document to the Watton-at-Stone website
5. Report the light out on the A602 at its junction with Whempstead Road
6. Complete the Data Protection Registration for the CCTV installation
7. Review Beanebytes quote for a new website and pass to Parish Councillors for approval
8. Add agenda item 'New Website' under Specific Items and retain current website under the Routine Reports
9. Sign a copy of the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee minutes
10. Advise Sports & Social Club that there is no increase in annual hire charge for 2018/19
11. Ask Steve Presland if he is interested in submitting a quotation for cutting the sportsfield hedge in 2018
12. Notify East Herts Council of estimated precept requirements for 2018/19

13. Renew SLCC membership
14. Pay D. P. Electrics invoice for renewing lighting in the main hall
15. E-mail Councillor Crofton to ask him for the Sports Partnership contact detail
16. Ask Ted Brown to clear leaves around perimeter of the tennis courts
17. Contact Diocesan Board re drawing up the Deed of Waiver re cricket runs
18. Monitor allotment plot with heavy-duty wooden posts re installation of fencing
19. Contact the first three people on the allotment list re plots coming available in the New Year
20. Report Highways issues on their online faults website
21. Ask Tom Goldsmith to use the remaining P3 funds to the benefit Watton-at-Stone
22. Write parish News article re Defibrillator

#### d) **Actions outstanding for more than two months**

##### 1. **Source shelving to store reserve library books in the loft**

As reported in the Trustees minutes dated 12<sup>th</sup> January, Mr. Meischke has found a shelving rack from G-Racks for £29.99 which appears to be suitable for use to store the reserve library books in the loft.

He suggested that initially only one shelving unit is purchased and if the quality is good, then possibly an additional five should be bought, which will be at a discounted multiple unit price. Parish Councillors agreed to the purchase of one shelving unit, with the option of purchasing up to an additional five units.

**Action: J. Meischke**

##### 2. **Investigate the cost of materials and labour to seal War Memorial stonework**

This action point is outstanding.

**Action: M. Smith**

##### 3. **Order 2 CCTV signs from 1<sup>st</sup> Call signs**

The Clerk said that the CCTV signs are on order from 1<sup>st</sup> Call Signs and will be ready for her to collect on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January.

**Action: J. Allsop**

##### 4. **Write parish News article re Dog fouling on footpath 17**

Dr. Waltham said she had completed this action point and the article should appear in the February issue of the Parish News.

#### **Police report from Sergeant Duncan Wallace**

Mr. Smith welcomed Sergeant Wallace to the meeting.

Sergeant Duncan Wallace updated the Parish Council on the crime figures for the period 1<sup>st</sup> December to today's date (16<sup>th</sup> January). There were fourteen incidents reported, one of which was a non-recordable incident. These figures compare with 18 recordable incidents for the same period last year. Since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 the crime figures for Watton-at-Stone have gone up by 2.6%, this equates to two additional incidents. Compared with other areas in East Herts, Watton-at-Stone crime figures look good.

Sergeant Duncan then gave details of the latest incidents and said he would email these to the Clerk, for forwarding to all Parish Councillors.

PCSO Sally Brook is now back on full operational duty and will give a talk to the Watton-at-Stone Brownies later this month.

Sergeant Wallace said that the police are having to deal with a lot more reportable incident of malicious communications. When legislation came out to cover malicious communications, there were only verbal or written incidents. However it now covers e-mails, social media, twitter etc and has greatly increased the police workload.

- Mrs. Stanley arrived at the meeting.

Mr. Meischke asked Sergeant Wallace if he was aware that the Parish Council had installed CCTV to cover the Community Hall and sportsfield areas. Sergeant Wallace said he had been made aware and was very pleased the Parish Council had taken this initiative.

## 6. **Planning**

Mrs. McCash reported on the following items.

### a) **Applications**

#### **Gregorys Farm, Unadopted Road North from Mill Lane Access to Gregorys Farm Dane End (3/17/2875/FUL)**

Change of use from agricultural to residential garden. Erection of car port/storage, oil tank and recreational driveway

Mrs. McCash said she had e-mailed all Parish Councillors the details of this application and suggested a no comment response. Parish Councillors were in agreement.

The Clerk was instructed to write to the planning department accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

### b) **Decisions**

None.

c) **Withdrawn****Watton At Stone Scout Group Mill Lane Watton At Stone (3/17/2372/FUL)**

Replacement garages/stores

Mrs. McCash said that the Scout and Guide Group will be resubmitting their application with a slight change of location for the replacement garages/stores

**7. Specific items**• **Dog fouling**

Mr. Smith explained to Mrs. Casey and Mrs. Corrin that the Parish Council has been trying to stop the dog fouling in the village. He had personally tried to involve the school re the fouling along footpath 17 and had also suggested that the caretaker could remove the mess before school starts each day. The latter did not have a positive response, although he has now started to remove some of the fouling

In May 2016 new dog fouling regulations came into force, making it not only illegal not to pick up your dog waste, but also not to go out prepared with a bag to put the mess in. Councillor Freeman renewed all the dog signs around the village. Initially some of the new signs were removed by members of the public and these had to be replaced, however this problem has now stopped. Mr. Smith showed Parish Councillors, and members of the public present, a double-sided leaflet produced by EHDC on dog fouling, which Councillor Freeman has suggested should be posted through the doors of the 100 houses closest to the school.

Mr. Smith said that the Parish Council had hoped that EHDC could loan them one of their mobile cameras to catch the dog fouling culprits. However, Councillor Freeman has informed us that EHDC only own two cameras, both of which are in use trying to catch fly-tipping culprits.

Mrs. McCash said that there is a serious dog fouling problem in the grounds of the Parish Church too.

Mrs. Casey and Mrs. Corrin said that there was also a problem in Great Innings and the grass verges are covered in dog waste. They said that the problem also extends throughout most of village.

Mrs. Casey said that the dog fouling near the school mainly comes from a larger dog, although there has been evidence of a smaller dog being involved too. The fouling was particularly bad last week and again yesterday (Monday).

Mrs. Casey said that this footpath is not lit at night and therefore very dark. Mr. Smith suggested that the Parish Council could pay for a light to be installed on school grounds. A further suggestion was that the light could be a motioned-sensor light. Parish Councillors agreed in principle to the purchase of a light of some form to be installed in the grounds of the school. Mr. Smith agreed to talk to Mrs. Hussain (the headteacher at Watton-at-Stone School) about this option which would require the use of the school's electricity supply. Mr. Smith also agreed to investigate some sort of surveillance for this area.

**Action: M. Smith**

The Parish Council agreed to a reward of £250 for information that leads to a conviction.

Mr. Smith agreed to produce a poster to be put up on the village notice boards.

**Action: M. Smith**

Mrs. Casey and Mrs. Corrin offered to help distribute leaflets around the village and the former gave her e-mail address to the Clerk.

The following was agreed.

- The Headteacher at the school to be contacted with a view to a streetlight being installed on school land to light up footpath 17.
- A £250 reward poster to be produced for information leading to a conviction.
- Councillor Freeman to be asked to obtain the yellow double-sided dog fouling notices for a village wide leaflet drop. Copies of the leaflets also to be made available to the school so they can be included in the children's 'book bags' that go home with them each night.
- A flier to be produced by the Parish Council for inclusion in the March issue of the Parish News.
- The Parish Council investigate some sort of surveillance for footpath 17 to catch out those not picking up their dog fouling's.

Mrs Casey and Mrs Corrin left the meeting.

a) **District Councillor Michael Freeman's Report**

Refer to item following 7 h, Agree meeting dates for the Civic Year 2018/19.

**b) Station Road update**

Mr. Stock has written to Farid Tilavi (HCC), with a copy to Trevor Brennan (HCC) and County Councillor Ken Crofton, about the total ineffectiveness of the two speed-cushions near the station.

He made it clear that the Parish Council, like the residents who have made their feelings known to us, consider the current speed-cushions to be a waste of time and money for all the reasons he had given in his previous correspondence with HCC on the subject.

On behalf of the Parish Council he asked that, as part of HCC’s monitoring/surveys of the outcome of the works in Station Road, particular attention is given to how easily vehicles can pass over the speed-cushions and what alternative solutions (e.g., a raised platform) they can propose so that a satisfactory conclusion to the scheme can be achieved.

In his reply, Farid Tilavi thanked us for the information and said that he “will discuss with the HCC project sponsor for the way forward” and inform us of the outcome.

If nothing is heard in the meantime, Mr. Stock to contact HCC for an update prior to our Parish Council Meeting in February.

**Action: D. Stock**

**c) Traffic along High Street, including the mini roundabouts**

Mrs. Stanley reported that one of the High Street residents, who lives near the entrance to Rivershill and opposite the layby, had been causing problems whilst trying to prevent people parking outside his property. Councillor Freeman said that the resident's behaviour had been abusive, and he had threatened car owners with damage to their vehicles if they park their cars outside his home.

Councillor Freeman had e-mailed Farid Tilavi to inform him of the situation and also copied the police. He said that, whilst this behaviour is totally unacceptable, as this section of road is on a bend he felt that it was, in fact, a dangerous place to park. Mrs. Stanley said that the Parish Council had suggested parking restrictions on this bend in the original scheme.

It was noted, once again, that the parking restrictions along the stretch outside the Bull and the shops were not being observed. Mrs. Stanley said that she would try to arrange a site meeting with Highways during the half term week in February to discuss all matters relating to the High Street scheme.

**Action: M. Stanley**

**d) Neighbourhood plan (NP) – progress report**

Dr. Waltham said that the Steering Group have updated the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan website following their announcement at the village meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> December, that they had decided not to continue their work to make a firm recommendation to EHDC about the release of green belt land in Watton-at-Stone for development. Mrs. Hammon wrote the conclusion summary for the website which gives the Steering Group’s reasons for not continuing with this work

The Inspector is due to produce a report expressing her views on this, and on the wider District Plan, in Spring 2018.

EHDC are expected to give Watton-at-Stone a housing number of a minimum of 10%, which equates to 90+ homes. If the Walkern Road site is released for development, it would give a maximum of 60 properties at 30 homes per hectare, but the density could be increased to 35 per hectare, giving it a density similar to Hazeldell. This, with other small brownfield developments in the village (i.e. the yard on Station Road and the Great Innings car park beside the former doctor’s surgery), should give the housing numbers required.

The Steering Group will be meeting with Claire Sime, Head of the Planning Department at EHDC, to discuss the evidence base they have already collected and also with the two developers. The Fairview News Homes meeting is on 23<sup>rd</sup> January to discuss the Walkern Road site.

- Councillor Freeman arrived at the meeting.

Any physical gains that can be obtained from each developer will be assessed. Football pitches can be considered a real gain.

If the greenbelt boundaries are changed they need to be protected further for the future ensuring they wrap very tightly around the village and include the river Beane and the woodland opposite Beane Road as well as additional protection by extending the existing conservation areas.

Councillor Freeman said that any development must not be derailed by a viability assessment and the developers need to do their sums up front.

The Steering Group may need to make a decision on affordable housing and could support the rentable sector rather than affordable housing.

Dr. Waltham said they need to wrap up loose ends in the AECOM report as the scheme ends in April. She said she had read through the report again this week and had put comments together for David Humby to reassess before getting back to AECOM. When the report is complete it will be uploaded to the Neighbourhood Plan website too.

The Steering Group are putting together some draft policies on how developments can take place. Dr. Waltham said that the Steering Group have lots of work to do and will be meeting again on 29<sup>th</sup> January to put together a contents list and try and populate the plan to see what they still need to do.

Mrs. Hammon said that green horizons was discussed at the Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils) run Neighbourhood Plan seminar she attended last June, in which differences areas in the village have different site plans. The case in point is for the Neighbourhood Plan to protect the village.

Dr. Waltham said she personally have a lot going on at the moment and might have to pull back on some of her other Parish Council duties. She apologised for totally forgetting to attend the Trustees meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> January.

• **E-mail from Clerk of Walkern Parish Council**

Walkern Parish Council have requested the Parish Council’s support in objecting to 150 houses being built in their village. The point of exit for this development is Walkern High Street, which is already a very congested road.

The County Council are not objecting to this application on highways issues and have already earmarked some of the S106 money that will come their way towards a library in Stevenage.

Councillor Freeman said he cannot comment on this application because he is on the committee that will ultimately decide the application, but as far as he is aware, highways never object to developments because of the highways access.

The Clerk to e-mail this application to all Parish Councillors so a decision to support this application, or not, can be made.

**Action: J. Allsop**

e) **Defibrillator/kiosk update**

Mr. Meischke said that the defibrillator will not be installed in the kiosk until after the appropriate signage has been made. Mr. Smith said that he had been into 1<sup>st</sup> Call signs to order all the signage required.

f) **CCTV**

Mr. Meischke said that, as minuted in the Trustees minutes of 12<sup>th</sup> January, the Trustees were pleased to be able in report that the CCTV installation seems to be working, as there appears to be no evidence of anti-social behaviour.

The loft that stores the recording equipment is now locked with a combination lock. Mr. Meischke said that a 4/5 tear ladder will be needed to unlock the combination padlock. This ladder could also be used to access the top of the cupboard in the referees changing room to charge the battery packs for the portable floodlights and would be used as a library ladder. Mr. Meischke said that he had found an appropriate library ladder which would cost £129.99 if the 4-tear version is appropriate, but he needs to check to see if the 4 or 5 tear ladder would be best. Parish Councillors agreed that Mr. Meischke should organise the purchase of a new ladder.

**Action: J. Meischke**

g) **New website**

Mr. Stock reported as follows.

- Further to the Beanbytes quote being accepted by all Parish Councillors, he met with Mark Stewart for a preliminary discussion concerning the design of the Homepage and the way forward.
- To get things moving, Mr. Stock has made some progress on the preparation of ‘templates’ and started to make contact with people who have an interest in individual webpages.
- A meeting of the Website Working Group to take place when the first proposal for the Homepage is available from Beanbytes.

**Action: D. Stock**

- The distribution of workload will be discussed during the above meeting.

h) **Agree meeting dates for the Civic Year 2018/19**

It was agreed that Parish Council meetings shall continue to be held on the third Tuesday in the month, with the exception of December 2018, which will be on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday.

• 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2018	• 20 <sup>th</sup> November 2018
• 19 <sup>th</sup> June 2018	• 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2018
• 17 <sup>th</sup> July 2018	• 15 <sup>th</sup> January 2019
• No meeting in August 2018	• 19 <sup>th</sup> February 2019
• 18 <sup>th</sup> September 2018	• 19 <sup>th</sup> March 2019
• 16 <sup>th</sup> October 2018	• 16 <sup>th</sup> April 2019

The Parish Council meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018, will be preceded by the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

**District Councillor Michael Freeman’s Report**

- **Dog fouling**

Mr. Smith updated Councillor Freeman on the discussions that took place earlier in the meeting re dog fouling and the course of action the Parish Council are taking. Refer to item 7, Specific items - Dog fouling. Councillor Freeman said that he would obtain the yellow dog fouling leaflets for distribution throughout the village. He said he would also order the full dog fouling kits, which include the yellow identification spray and speak to Anglia Housing about the dog fouling in Great Innings to see if they can assist in resolving the problem.

- **Govia**

Councillor Freeman has a meeting planned later this week with Govia and will send the Parish Council a complete update on all the issues you mention.

Councillor Freeman left the meeting at 2107

**8. Sub-Committees**

**Budget & Finance**

- **Monthly accounts**

**Watton-at-Stone Parish Council**

<b>Petty Cash – Receipts</b>		<b>Petty cash - Payments</b>	
None		None	
<b>Cheques issued</b>			
Beane Bites	Deposit payment for design of new Website		300.00
Bidwells	Allotment Glebe rent		335.00
SLCC	Annual subscription		143.00
Wages and salaries	December 2017		1162.36
HMRC	NI - PC and Clerk period ending October to December 2017		220.38
			<b>2160.74</b>
<b>Cheques received</b>			
Football Club	Donations towards replacement light floodlighting stand		90.00
Sports and Social Club	Hire of sportsfield facilities		375.00
			<b>465.00</b>

**Watton-at-Stone Community Hall**

<b>Petty Cash – Receipts</b>		<b>Petty Cash -Payments</b>	
Carla Beach – (5 weeks)	157.50	None	
Tony Silvestri – Pavilion (5 weeks)	50.00		
Youth Football – Main Hall	20.00		
Archery - 5 weeks (6 hours)	48.00		
Claudia Rain – Main Hall and	67.50		
Ramblers - Pavilion	7.00		
Clare Young – Main Hall	12.00		
Floodlighting from 06.12.17 to	260.00		
Forever Active - December	240.00		
	<b>862.00</b>		
<b>Cheques issued</b>			
D. P. Electrics	Main Hall lighting		912.00
D. P. Electrics	Remove old fitting in car park lamppost, replace with new		151.20
Hertfordshire County	Cleaning materials		98.24
RVTV	Installation of CCTV system		3,108.00
			<b>4,269.44</b>
<b>Cheques received</b>			
Juliet Newman	Tumble Tots Main Hall		160.00
Claudia Rain			15.00
Felicitas Dixon	Main Hall and Pavilion		22.00
Sports and Social Club	Hire of facilities		375.00
Louise Bater	Pavilion hire		136.80
Ildiko Imre Kada	Meeting room		72.00
Badminton	Main Hall		171.00
Felicitas Dixon	Main Hall and Pavilion		22.00
			<b>973.80</b>

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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 items such as the arson attack on the play area, he was not unduly concerned in the variations of these nine-monthly figures.
- **9-monthly inspection of accounts**  
Mrs. Stanley carried-out the nine-month inspection of the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts on 15<sup>th</sup> January and they were in good order.  
A copy of Mrs. Stanley's reports is included in the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts for 2017/18.
- **Precept 2018/19**  
At its December 2017 meeting, the Parish Council agreed that the provisional precept requirement for 2018/19 is £35,455. 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**

### Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Meischke reported on the following item.

- **Report and minutes of Trustees meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2018**  
All Parish Councillors have been e-mailed a copy of the Trustees minutes dated 12<sup>th</sup> January 2018.  
Mr. Meischke went through the different items discussed at the Trustees meeting and gave updates are required.
  - **Ladder**  
Refer to item 7 f, Specific items – CCTV.
  - **Shelving for library books in the loft**  
Refer to item 5 d, Actions outstanding for more than two months - Source shelving to store reserve library books in the loft.
  - **Annual Charity return**  
The Annual Charitable Trust return for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 has been submitted to the Charitable Commission.
  - **Keys**  
The Clerk has given Mr. Knight a set of three keys (external door key, large and small changing rooms keys). She will be purchasing replacement keys including three external door keys). **Action: J. Allsop**
  - **Kitchen**  
Mr. Meischke said that he will be considering the design and costings for installing a new Kitchen and would, in the first instance, be contacting a kitchen installer who lives in the village. At a later stage he will obtain further quotations from companies like B&Q for comparison. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Cleaners**  
The contract with Little Gems, who clean the Community Hall on Mondays, comes to an end on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2018. Mr. Meischke said that he was happy with the quality of work they have provided over the past year and Mr. Stock had backed this up at the recent Trustees meeting, when he observed how good the hall looked.  
Parish Councillors agreed that Little Gems' contract should be renewed for another year at the same price per clean. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Youth club**  
One of the Youth Club members accidentally hit a light in the pavilion when kicking a ball, which knocked the silver coloured safety guard off. Mr. Meischke said that he had managed to refit the safety guard.
- **Accident on the sportsfield**  
One of the members of the girl football team dislocated her knee and Mr. Meischke took her to A&E because the scheduled time to get an ambulance on site was too long. This incident has not been logged in the accident report book because it did not happen in the Community Hall.
- **Fire extinguisher**  
The fire extinguisher in the kitchen has its safety pin missing. Mr. Meischke to source a replacement pin. **Action: J. Meischke**

- **Forever Active**

Mr. Meischke asked Mrs. McCash if he could talk to her about the financial aspect of the Parish Council taking over the running of the Forever Active activities once East Herts Council finish the scheme in October this year. She agreed to do so.

Mrs. McCash left the meeting.

### Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **Tennis Court – wire netting replacement**

Mr. Knight said that he has contacted four fencing contractors and already received three quotations. He is meeting with the fourth, Jarrett Fencing, this week.

Mr. Knight said that when he has received all the quotations he will compare them and email Parish Councillors the details.

**Action: I. Knight**

- **Cricket nets**

Mr. Knight said that Kevin Dinnin had copied him in on the costings for installing the cricket nets and base. These figures balance with the funds raised by the Cricket Club. The installation of the cricket runs cannot start until the Deed of Waiver has been drawn up and signed.

Mr. Smith said that he had instructed Alex Porter of Bidwells, who act on behalf of the St Albans Diocesan Board, to draw up the Deed of Waiver. He agreed to chase this matter if he does not hear from Mr. Porter within the next couple of weeks.

**Action: M. Smith**

### Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Allotments**

Mrs. Dinnin said that the first three people on the allotment waiting list have been e-mailed to inform them that plots have come available. She will be contacting them again when the weather improves to show them around.

Mr. Smith said he would get the Clerk to order the recycled plastic posts as well as the number and lettered disks.

**Action: M. Smith/J. Allsop**

Mr. Smith agreed to write to the owners of the hedge that is overgrowing the Allotment footpath.

Mrs. Dinnin to give him their contact details.

**Action: C. Dinnin/M. Smith**

- **Lammas**

Mrs. Dinnin said that some of the wooden boards fitted by the CMS volunteers near the Lammas steps they rebuilt have been removed and put into a makeshift den near the site. CMS volunteers have agreed to reinstate the boards for no extra charge. As soon as the work is completed, Mrs. Dinnin will submit the end of year P3 paperwork.

**Action: C. Dinnin**

- **Watton Green Cottage Site**

Mrs. Dinnin said that Tony Bradford was hoping to do the work outlined in his August e-mail last weekend and do some planting. Mr. Filer confirmed that he saw three people working on site over the weekend.

- **Village maintenance contract**

All Parish Councillors were e-mailed copies of quotations for the village maintenance contract as follows.

	1-year contract	3-year contract	
Adam Welch	£2,950	£8,850	
R. D. C. Garden Maintenance	£3,000	£8,500	
Rose Landscapes	£31,632.00	£87,778.80	

Mrs. Dinnin said that although Adam Welch’s quotation comes out at £350 more for a 3-year contract, she would like the Parish Council to accept his quotation. We know that the work he does is good and that he does not need reminding to do it. We do not know anything about R. D. C. Garden Maintenance. Mr. Filer said that he uses them to do his gardening works and their work is excellent. Mr. Smith said that the Parish Council is charged with giving the best value for money and that does not necessarily mean accepting the cheapest quote.

Parish Councillors agreed to award Adam Welch with a 3-year contract. R. D. C Garden Maintenance to be informed that the Parish Council will in the future consider them for other work within the village.

The Clerk to write to all three contractors accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Overgrown hedge**  
Some of the hedging along the section of High Street between School Lane and the George and Dragon is obstruction this narrow section of footpath. It was agreed to ask the Abel Smith Estate to arrange for it to be cut back before the nesting season.  
**Action: J. Allsop**

## New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee

Nothing to report.

### b) Routine Reports

- Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests**  
Mr. Meischke and Mr. Stock did the emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call testing on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2018.
- 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**
- Weekly reports - Fire Inspection and shower tests**  
Nothing adverse to report.
- Health and Safety for village halls**  
Nothing adverse to report.
- Monthly village-report**  
Mrs. Hammon completed the report on 13<sup>th</sup> January.
  - **Sportsfield** – two litterbins have slipped down their poles and are sitting on the grass, one of the bins is located beside 'Harry's bench'. Both bins were also full of water and Mrs. Hammon suggested drilling holes in the bottom of the bin to let the water run out. Mr. Meischke to inspect both bins and take action as required  
**Action: J. Meischke**
  - **Safety Surface** under the swings is deteriorating. Part of seal (over-banding) missing under sea saw.
  - **Swings** – chipped paint, starting to flake off on the top pole. Graffiti on top bar.
    - **Baby swings**, rubber on seats around the top starting to go.  
Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke to inspect the safety surface and swings.  
**Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke**
  - **Harry's bench'** – front slat is in a poor state. Mrs. Dinnin to contact the family re a replacement recycled plastic seat.  
**Action: C. Dinnin**
  - **Tennis courts** – see 6-month check below.
  - **Allotments** – wire on gate at church yard end of the allotments is coming away. Mrs. Dinnin to inspect.  
**Action: C. Dinnin**
  - **General**
    - Station and Moorymead entrances worst for litter.
    - Dog mess not noticeably a problem
    - Generally village looks fine.
    - Lots of decomposing leaf litter at bottom of Station Road (pavements and gutters).  
Mrs. Dinnin said that Adam Welch is scheduled to do a litterpick in the next few weeks (late January/early February).
- 6-month check**  
Mr. Stock carried out the internal checks of the Community Hall plus the inspection of the benches and War Memorial with Mr. Meischke on 12<sup>th</sup> January, and then the items on the sportsfield with Mrs. Hammon on 13<sup>th</sup> January.  
Refer to Monthly village-report above re inspection with the exception of the items below.

- **Benches:**
  - **Walkern Road** – noted plastic on left hand arm blown.
  - **High Street near Mill lane** – candidate for painting.
  - **High Street South adjacent to Ornate Village sign** - Bottom rear rail in poor condition.

- **Sportsfield ‘Paul John Hart bench** – position of bench under canopy of Oak Tree.  
Mr. Stock and Mrs. Hammon noted that the seat moved from under the Oak has been relocated within the tree's canopy. He questioned whether or not this was an appropriate location for the bench because it is sited just in front of the low barrier-rail fence which carries a notice about the possible danger of falling branches. Parish Councillors discussed the matter and decided that the bench is to stay where it is for the time being. It was accepted that regardless of the current notices, people still like to sit on the grass under this tree.
- **Sportsfield ‘Harry’s bench’** – refer to monthly village-report above.
- **Tennis Courts** – generally as per known/discussed state re fencing and kicker-boards. Small hole/surface-break noted between the two courts in Tennis Court A. Mr. Knight to investigate.

**Action: I. Knight**

vii) **Weekly sportsfield**

Nothing to report.

viii) **Website/Facebook**

Nothing to report.

ix) **Highway and Lighting faults**

The Clerk to report the following items on the Highways faults website.

- Lamppost 2 in Mill Lane. This light has been previously reported out on several occasions. Mrs. Dinnin said that it had been out for months and it is very dark in this area.
- Streetlight on the wall of the Chinese takeaway

**Action: J. Allsop**

x) **Dog fouling reports**

Refer to item 7, Specific items.

## 9. Correspondence received

a) **Dr. Norden – update on BT fast broadband installation**

Dr. Norden e-mailed on 6<sup>th</sup> January as follows.

“BT Openreach have told me, in response to my request for an update, that they now plan on getting this up and running by 31st March.

I shall contact them again, in say mid-February/early March.

The schedule has slipped again I am afraid, though still within contract”

- **Letter from Woodhall Estate**

Mr. Smith said that he had received a letter from Andrew Capel, the new Estate Director at Woodhall Estate, to ask if Parish Councillors would be interested in seeing the restoration work they have done on the Broadwater. The Broadwater is the lake formed when the River Beane, which runs through the estate, was dammed.

Aston Parish Council, who have also been invited, are keen for Watton-at-Stone Parish Councillors to attend. Parish Councillors agreed that Mr. Smith should reply to Andrew Capel’s stating the Parish Council’s interest in attending.

**Action: M. Smith**

## 10. Village organisations

Nothing to report.

## 11. Items for Parish News

The following item was identified for inclusion in the March 2018 issues of the Parish News.

- Dog fouling flier as in insert in the Parish News.

**Action: M. Smith**

**The meeting closed at 2204.**

**The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2018.**