

**Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

<b>Present:</b>	Mr. Mike Smith (Chairman)	Mr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman)
	Mrs. Christine Dinnin	Mr. Denis Filer
	Mrs. Catherine Hammon (after 1940)	Mr. Ian Knight
	Mr. David Stock	
	Mrs. Jane Allsop (Clerk)	
<b>Public:</b>	District Councillor Michael Freeman after 1935 to 2030)	

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence: Mrs. McCash and Mrs. Stanley and Dr. Emma Waltham

**2. Public Participation**

None.

**3. Chairman’s/Clerk’s Report**

None.

**4. Declaration of Interests**

None.

**5. Minutes of the last meeting**

**a) Acceptance**

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018**  
Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved.

**b) Review of actions**

**1. Investigate surveillance for footpath 17 area**

Mr. Smith said that he had inspected footpath 17 area on a few occasions since the January Parish Council meeting and not seen any evidence of dog fouling. Mr. Stock said there is a significant amount of dog fouling on Station Road.

**2. Produce a dog fouling aware poster to be put up on the village notice boards**

Mr. Smith said that he had produced a dog fouling notice and put one copy up at the Community Hall, two near the school and three on the Great Innings estate.

**3. Produce Dog Fouling flier for inserting in Parish News**

Mr Smith to give Mr. Knight the dog fouling flier he has produced, for insertion in the Parish News.

**Action: M. Smith**

**4. Contact kitchen installer re Community Hall kitchen**

Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall Trustees - Kitchen - update on design and costings.

**5. Inspect litter bins on the sportsfield**

Mr. Meischke said that the Parish Council need to invest in lidded litterbins for the sportsfield and one by the bull car park because the bin bags blow out in windy weather depositing litter and in wet weather the bags get full of water. It was agreed to purchase three Glasdon lidded litterbins, of the same style and specification as last purchased.

**Action: J. Allsop**

Parish Council agreed that gradually all the Parish Council litterbins should be replaced with lidded ones.

**6. Inspect swings on the sportsfield**

Mr. Meischke said he had inspected the swings. He said that it is the Parish Council’s intention to replace the swings once the neighbourhood plan has been agreed and the potential future of the sportsfield is known and where any new play equipment could be installed. He therefore suggested that no action should be taking about the flaking paintwork at this time. This was agreed.

**7. Contact Harry’s family re replacement memorial bench: outstanding**

**Action: C. Dinnin**

**8. Inspect write netting on gate at church end of allotments: outstanding**

**Action: C. Dinnin**

**c) Action points resolved**

1. Purchase shelving unit(s) to store reserve library books in the loft
2. Collect CCTV signs from 1<sup>st</sup> Call signs
3. Write to the planning department re Gregorys Farm
4. Contact HCC for an update on Station Road prior to our Parish Council Meeting in February
5. Arrange a site meeting with Highways
6. E-mail planning application or housing development in Walkern to all Parish Councillors
7. Purchase a new ladder for Community Hall

8. Arrange meeting of Website Working Group
9. Return completed precept form to East Herts Council
10. Order replacement keys for Main door and changing room locks
11. Renew cleaning contract with Little Gems
12. Source a replacement pin for the kitchen fire extinguisher
13. E-mail Parish Councillors quotations for replacing wire netting on Tennis Court
14. Order recycled plastic posts and number and letter disks for the allotments
15. Write to the owners of the hedge that is overgrowing the Allotment footpath
16. Complete P3 end of year paperwork
17. Write to contractors re village maintenance contract
18. Ask the Abel Smith Estate to cut back hedging along High Street
19. Report identified Highways issues
20. Accept Woodhall Estate's invitation to see restoration work on the Broadwater

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

1. **Investigate the cost of materials and labour to seal War Memorial Stonework:** outstanding.  
**Action: M. Smith**
2. **Install defibrillator in kiosk**  
Refer to item 7 e, Specific – Defibrillator/kiosk update.
3. **Install solar powered light when the defibrillator is installed in the kiosk**  
Refer to item 7 e, Specific – Defibrillator/kiosk update.

**6. Planning**

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

The three planning applications below were reviewed, and Parish Councillors had agreed (via email) that 'no comment' responses should be made to the planning department at East Herts Council.

**a) Applications**

- i) **19 Stoney Fields (3/18/0104/HH)**  
Loft conversion with dormer front window
- ii) **132a High Street (3/18/0199/HH)**  
Demolition of garage and erection of a single storey side and rear extension with car port
- iii) **16 Great Innings South (3/18/0162/FUL)**  
Installation of external wall insulation to the walls and the soffit areas on front and rear elevations

**b) Decisions**

None.

**7. Specific items**

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

Refer to item directly after 7 c, Specific items - Traffic along High Street, including the mini roundabouts.

**b) Station Road update**

Prior to the site meeting re the High Street (see next item), Mr Stock took the opportunity to discuss the subject of the 2 new and ineffective speed-cushions with the 3 HCC representatives present.

Their view remains the same in so much as the dimensions and position of the 2 'humps' are in accordance with current regulations.

HCC is to carry out speed-monitoring to determine whether or not traffic speeds have decreased since the introduction of the speed-cushions. He reminded HCC of the Parish Councillor's views and their desire to seek an alternative solution to improve pedestrian-safety in the vicinity of the Railway station, especially since the introduction of the bus-stop layby-markings; which encroach on to the carriageway close to the bridge.

Apart from mentioning the issue of funding, HCC will not comment further until the completion of the speed-monitoring exercise.

Mr. Stock to contact HCC for an update on progress prior to the Parish Council meeting in March.

**Action: D. Stock**

As far as an alternative solution to the speed-cushions is concerned, Mr. Stock suspected that there is not the same strength of will as ours to do more that has already been done in Station Road. This sentiment was agreed by those Parish Councillors present.

- District Councillor Freeman arrived at the meeting

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

In the absence of Mrs. Stanley, Mr. Smith asked Mr. Stock to read from her report as follows.

Mrs. Stanley, Mr. Smith, Mr. Stock, Mrs. Dinnin, Mrs. McCash, and District Councillor Mike Freeman had a site meeting with HCC regarding the High Street on Monday 12th February. The main points from the meeting were as follows:

1. We discussed the potential danger caused by people parking on the bend near the Rivershill junction and the poor visibility this caused. Although not Highways matter we did mention the situation with disgruntled residents and their abusive behaviour.
2. We reiterated that the PC had originally agreed to a scheme which provided bolt-holes at intervals rather than the current arrangement of parking restrictions at certain times during the week, but this had been changed following discussions between HCC and County Councillor Ken Crofton. We emphasised the 'chaos' that the current arrangement caused, especially at weekends when there were events on the sports field and customers were lunching at The Bull.
3. HCC were still adamant that because of new specifications, the footpath opposite Crumbs and down to the Memorial Hall was too narrow to enable bollards to be installed to prevent cars mounting the pavement. If however there were bolt-holes on the opposite side this problem might be alleviated.
4. With regard to the mini-roundabout at the Great Innings Junction, HCC seem reluctant to consider the possibility of re-siting it to improve the site lines. They did agree to obtain a cost for enlarging the diameter and the height of the disc but were quick to mention that they were unsure how such works could be funded.

HCC agreed that they would reconsider all these points and come back to us in due course. ‘

It was noted that there was little or no parking in the High Street at the time of the site meeting and therefore there was a clear view of the carriageway. This was helpful in so much that when the time-restrictions are not in force, nothing of substance has changed and the High Street is much as it was before the current scheme was installed. That said it was agreed that the junction protection at Rivershill and the parking restrictions in the layby adjacent to the bus stop were having a positive effect.

• **District Councillor Michael Freeman’s Report**

• **Dog bin**

Councillor Freeman said that Clarion Housing Association have agreed to relocate some of the dog bins on the Great Innings estate. He said he had also asked them to provide an additional dog bin on the estate.

Mrs. Hammon arrived at the meeting.

Councillor Freeman has obtained 1,000 copies of the yellow double-sided dog fouling notices for a village wide leaflet drop.

The Clerk to email Mrs. Louise Casey and Mrs. Claire Corrin, who agreed at the January Parish Council meeting to help with the deliveries. **Action: J. Allsop**

Parish Councillors agreed to deliver to the areas that Mrs. Casey and Mrs. Corrin could not help with.

The Clerk to organise a distribution list. **Action: J. Allsop**

The dog warden has given Councillor Freeman some dog fouling prevention kits, which include the yellow spray paint to highlight fouling in the hope of shaming a dog owner into acting responsibly.

• **Trains**

Councillor Freeman met with Great Northern Railway and asked them 19 questions, the answers to these questions and be found on the Watton-at-Stone website as well as on the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council’s Facebook page.

**d) Neighbourhood plan**

Mr. Smith gave his report on the meeting he and Dr. Waltham had with Claire Sime (Planning department, East Herts Council), which confirmed the following details

- Neighbourhood Plans cannot alter green belt boundaries.
- Group 1 Villages will still be expected to deliver 500 Houses (Watton-at-Stone = 94 houses).
- Neighbourhood Plans should consider where and how and to what advantage this number can be developed.
- Where such proposals involve changes to the Green Belt boundaries, the District Council will consider making these amendments through the next review of the District Plan (5+years).
- If the Neighbourhood Plan indicates a desire for earlier development this will be facilitated by a *Site Allocation Development Plan*.
- If there is not at least a draft Neighbourhood Plans in place by 2021, the District Council may identify sites and issue a *site allocation development plan*.

- If a Neighbourhood Plan is being developed, development will be restricted to within the village boundary.
- Development in Group 2 Villages will be treated as ‘windfall development’.

Mr. Smith said that it has transpired that the land adjacent to the BT exchange is no longer in the Green Belt. Councillor Freeman received the following email of confirmation from Claire Sine (East Herts District Council Planning)

“As I said previously, the site was shown excluded from the Green Belt on the Policies Map published in November 2016 and has therefore been in the public domain for some time. Whilst originally a cartographical error, officers through the examination process considered the contribution that the area makes towards Green Belt purposes and concluded that as the land makes no contribution to these purposes then it should more appropriately lie within the village development boundary for Watton-at-Stone.

The site was specifically brought to the Inspector’s attention in the attached addendum. The Inspector has not provided any comments on this. I can only apologise that firstly, we did not advise you of the error, and secondly that we did not specifically bring the addendum which dealt with the error to your attention. I am sorry if this has put you in a difficult position and has caused concern locally.

I can also confirm that Mr Thornhill is aware that the land is shown excluded from the Green Belt on the Policies Map published in November 2016 and has been following progress of the District Plan.”

Mrs. Hammon agreed to find out if the correct procedure has taken place to allow the release of this land from Green Belt. **Action: C. Hammon**

M. Smith to act on Mrs. Hammon’ response, in liaison with other Parish Councillors. **Action: M. Smith**

• **Mill Lane site**

Cllr Mike Freeman said that he had received a telephone call from David Toll, the owner of the derelict Mill Lane site, to say that someone had broken into the site and stolen the gas meters. Mr. Toll is in the process of submitting a planning application to the District Council to develop this site.

e) **Defibrillator/kiosk update**

Mr. Smith said that the defibrillator metal cabinet was now installed in the BT phone box. As reported at the December Parish Council meeting, there will be no electricity to the defibrillator housing, which means that the heater and internal light will not work.

All the defibrillator signage for the BT box and village sign posts have now been purchased from 1<sup>st</sup> Call Signs at a cost of £287 plus VAT

Mr. Smith said that the defibrillator needs to be registered and checked to see it is working properly before the signage is installed. Hopefully this item will be fully installed shortly. **Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke**

f) **New website**

Mr. Stock continues to work closely with Beanebytes on the design, structure and layout of the new website. Good progress is being made and the other members of the Working Group [i.e., Mr. Meischke, Mr. Smith and the Clerk (Dr. Waltham is not currently involved due to other commitments)] are all in agreement with what has been achieved so far.

The workload remains high but is being helped by the distribution of tasks between the Working Group. In addition to the writing and updating of pages for which we are responsible, much time is taken-up by the Working Group contacting those with other entries on the website to ensure that the information contained therein is still valid/up-to-date.

Mr. Stock pointed out that once the focus of attention is off the structure and operating aspects of the website and the workload has eased, the Working Group will address the use or otherwise of our current logo and make recommendations to the Parish Council as necessary.

Mr. Meischke and Mr. Smith thanked Mr. Stock for all that he is doing as the Lead Parish Councillor for this project and that in reality he was doing most of the work.

g) **Notice Boards**

Mr. Smith said that the Clerk is having difficulty opening the Parish Council notice board located next to the outside toilet door at the Community Hall.

A new Weather Shield Lockable External notice board from XL Displays would cost £330 including VAT and delivery. This would be a smaller version of our notice board by the Village Shop and Post Office.

Parish Councillors agreed to this purchase. The Clerk to order accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Smith said that he will consider relocating the current notice board to the Great Innings notice board site as it is a much larger board. **Action: M. Smith**

Councillor Freeman said that he had the keys to the large Clarion Housing Association notice board on the Great Innings estate and had obtained their permission to put village notices on it.

## 8. Sub-Committees

### Budget & Finance

Mr. Filer reported on the following items.

- **Monthly accounts**

#### Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty cash - Payments	
Tony Silverstri – Allotment	<u>67.25</u>	Fast Host – watton-pc.org.uk domain	<u>11.99</u>
	<u>67.25</u>		<u>11.99</u>
<b>Cheques issued</b>			
Community Hall	½ year grant		3315.00
SLCC	Annual subscription		143.00
Wages and salaries	January salary, allowance & mobile phone contribution		1229.96
British Telecom	BT monthly phones charge (includes line rental) July-		<u>93.36</u>
			<b><u>4781.32</u></b>
<b>Cheques received</b>			
Denise Hodgson	Allotment rent and £50 deposit		67.25
Chris King	Allotment rent and £50 deposit		<u>67.25</u>
			<b><u>134.50</u></b>

#### Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
Carla Beach – (5 weeks)	157.50	None	
Tony Silvestri – Pavilion (5 weeks)	50.00		
Youth Football – Main Hall	30.00		
Archery - 4 weeks	48.00		
Clare Young – Main Hall	12.00		
Forever Active - December	<u>504.00</u>		
	<b><u>801.50</u></b>		
<b>Cheques issued</b>			
P J Roofing Limited	repair roof		297.60
Wages	22.5 hours cleaning @ £8.45 per hour		809.13
Ladder4Sale	Step ladder		190.99
Laidlaw	3 keys (2 x Large changing rooms, 1 x small changing)		<u>62.40</u>
			<b><u>1360.12</u></b>
<b>Cheques received</b>			
HCC	Pavilion hire		36.00
Dave Boddy	Main Hall		150.00
Watton Youth Club	Main Hall and Pavilion		<u>138.00</u>
			<b><u>324.00</u></b>

Parish Councillors agreed the payments.

- **Annual review of the Parish Council's financial regulations adopted in October 2012**

Mr. Filer said that the Parish Council's Financial regulations need reviewing annually.

The following changes were agreed.

Item 6. 1 -All payments shall be effected by cheque, cash (up to a maximum of £75) or other order drawn on the Council's bankers. Cash payments to be increased from £75 to £150.

Item 10.1V - for additional audit work of the external Auditor up to an estimated value of £250 (in excess of this sum the Clerk shall act after consultation with the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Council) and with consultation of the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee. to be increased from, £250 to £350.

- **Risk assessment and financial management**

The following changes to be made to the Parish Council's Risk Assessment and Financial Management schedule

- Periodic audit checks – to change from a named councillor (Mrs McCash) to a designated councillor.
- Precept – changed from a Medium to Low risk
- Clerk's salary - incorrect salary paid - changed from Medium to Low risk

- NALC scale not available - changed from High to Medium risk
- MPPA to be altered to Tennis Courts a and b and to change from a High to Medium risk
- Community Hall – risk of legionnaire’s disease to change from Low to Medium risk

The Clerk to email copies of both amended documents to all Parish Councillors for adoption at the March Parish Council meeting. **Action: J. Allsop/D. Filer**

### Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Meischke reported on the following item.

- **Shelving unit(s) to store reserve library books in the loft**  
Mr. Meischke said that now that the one books shelf has been installed in the loft, it may be sufficient to store the reserve library books and if not, only one additional book shelf will be required.
- **Purchase of multi-use step ladder**  
Mr. Meischke said that the first style of step ladder ordered had to go back twice. The first time because it was damaged and the second time because the handles were not in the same position as advertised and therefore not fit for use.  
A second style of steps was ordered and these have turned out to be perfect and very robust.
- **Kitchen - update on design and costings**  
Mr. Meischke said he is in the process of obtaining an estimate from a local installer for the installation of a new kitchen, which will be used for budgeting purposes.
- **CCTV - installation cost**  
Mr. Meischke said that because of the public outcry for CCTV around the Community Hall and sportsfield area, the cost of installation should not be borne by the Community Hall.  
Parish Councillors agreed that New Homes Bonus funds should be used to reimburse the Community Hall.  
The Clerk to act accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Kitchen lock**  
Michael Lewis (AP Access) has repaired the kitchen lock at no charge to the Community Hall.
- **Meeting room**  
Mr. Meischke said he had fitted special glide pads to the bottom of the meeting room chairs, because they were scratching the floor.  
He had also replaced one of the ceiling lights in the meeting room and as a result had noticed how much better the light was, so will find out the cost of replacing the remaining lamps. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Shower heads**  
Mr. Meischke said that he had today cleaned the shower heads. He asked the Clerk to put a diary reminder to clean the shower heads every six months. **Action: J. Allsop**

Mike freeman left the meeting at 2040.

### Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **Tennis Courts**
  - **Pressure washing**  
Mr. Knight said that he would put the wheels in motion to have the tennis courts pressure washed before the end of March. He agreed to obtain several quotations and accept the lowest. **Action: I. Knight**
  - **Wire netting quotes and grant application**  
Mr. Knight said that a grant application has been submitted to replace the wire netting and posts on the double tennis courts. If unsuccessful, the Parish Council will need to decide what to do next.
- **Playing field – Goal mouth repair**  
Sometime in March, Mr. Smith and Mr. Knight will decide what should be done with the goal mouths areas. **Action: I. Knight/M. Smith**
- **Cricket nets/Deed of Waiver - update**  
Mr. Smith agreed to chase Alex Porter of Bidwells, who act on behalf of the St Albans Diocesan Board, to find out how the Deed of Waiver is progressing. **Action: M. Smith**  
The Cricket Club have run into difficulty with one of the project contractors, when asked to add some slight changes to their quotation, they have doubled the figure. Mr. Smith said he was positive that the Cricket Club would be able to get the cricket net project within budget.

## Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Allotments**

Mrs. Dinnin said that she had re let four allotment plots to new tenants and she had emailed the last two on the waiting list. Two of the allotment plots were large ones and they have both been split in two, allowing her to accommodate all 6 people on the waiting list.

- **Lammas**

Mrs. Dinnin said that CMS volunteers have reinstated the wood that was removed and cleared away the den made by youths.

- **War Memorial**

Some more planting is needed for the War Memorial garden. Mr. Stock agreed to investigate how much the additional plants will cost. Mrs. Dinnin to find out how much Adam Welch would charge to remove some dead plants and plant the new ones.

**Action: D. Stock/C. Dinnin**

Mr. Stock said that to date he and other Parish Councillors had done all the planting around the War Memorial at no cost to the Parish Council.

## New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee

Nothing to report.

### b) Routine Reports

- i) **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 directly before this meeting.

- 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.

- iii) **Weekly reports - Fire Inspection and shower tests**

Nothing adverse to report.

- iv) **Health and Safety for village halls**

Nothing adverse to report.

- v) **Monthly village-report**

Mrs. Stanley completed the report on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> February and reported the following:

Generally, all looks good for winter conditions. The main points to note are as follows:

- **Sportsfield** - There are a number of holes on the football pitch where the rabbits have started digging - perhaps the footballers need to be aware in case of ankle injuries.
- **Play area** - Surface very muddy, some dog fouling by hedge, condition of surface and swings as previously noted.
- **Allotments** - Paths mostly clear but some at bottom end appear not to be maintained. Various assortment of 'features and structures' including an old bath and a patio door.
- **Mill Lane** - Some dog fouling, culverts clear but both here and at the end of footpath 17 bags of rubbish had been dumped under the litter bins.
- **War Memorial** - Looks good with spring bulbs coming through along with a few small weeds.
- **Ornate Village Sign** - Again looks good but the moles have been busy on the verge.
- **Footpath by school**
- There was some dog fouling.
- **Salt bins** - all full.
- **Dog bins** - all OK."

- **See Saw**

Mr. Meischke said that there should have been an action point to repair the part of the seal (over-banding) that is missing under the see saw. He said he would arrange for the work to be done when the weather improves.

**Action: J. Meischke**

- vii) **Weekly sportsfield**

Nothing to report.

- viii) **Website/Facebook**

Nothing to report.

**ix) Highway and Lighting faults**

Nothing to report.

**x) Dog fouling reports**

Mr. Smith asked the Clerk to record all reported dog fouling incidents.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**9. Correspondence received****• Police report from Sergeant Duncan Wallace**

This report, dated 20<sup>th</sup> February, has been emailed to all Parish Councillors.

**10. Village organisations****• War Memorial**

Mr. Stock said that the main hall wooden flooring and staging is due to be stripped, sanded and resealed as the final stage in the War Memorial hall's refurbishment.

**11. Items for Parish News**

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

- Dog-fouling flier.

**Action: I. Knight**

**The meeting closed at 2102.**

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