

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 12th February 2019

Present:	Mr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman)	Mrs. Christine Dinnin
	Mrs. Catherine Hammon (after 2004)	Mrs. Margaret Stanley
	Mr. David Stock	Dr. Emma Waltham
	Mrs. Jane Allsop (Clerk)	
Public:	Joe Thomas and Harry Milkins	
Police:	PCSO Sally Brooks	

In the absence of Mr. Smith, Mr. Meischke took the Chair.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence: Mr. Mike Smith (Chairman), Mr. Stephen Block, Mr. Ian Knight, Mrs. Helen McCash, District Councillor Sophie Bell.

2. Public Participation

Mr. Meischke welcomed members of the public Joe Thomas and Harry Milkins to the meeting and asked them if they were interested in any specific item. Joe Thomas expressed an interest in item 7 a i, planning applications - HCC depot, Station Road (3/18/2764/OUT). He said that he lives in the first cul-de-sac in Moorymead Close and would be able to see any development from his home.

3. Chairman’s/Clerk’s Report

None.

4. Declaration of Interests

Mr. Meischke declared a personal interest in the final item under 6 a, planning applications - The Bull, 113 (Mr. Meischke’s home is near the Bull).

5. Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

• **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 15th January 2019**

Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved.

• **Police Report**

PCSO Sally Brooks said that there had not been a great deal going on in Watton-at-Stone since their last report in December. She said that the main problems they have encountered have been theft to motor vehicles in the surrounding areas. However, there have been multiple drug incidents in Great Innings. One lady had been reporting incidents to the police on a regular basis and she also reported an assault, which was later withdrawn. The police are working closely with Clarion Housing Group as the people involved with the drug taking in the main their tenants.

• **Mill Lane building**

PCSO Sally Brooks expressed her concerns about the security of the Mill building, because it is currently being used by drug users, who are gaining access through the breached bricked-up window and door areas. Mr. Meischke said that under item 4 of District Councillors Sophie Bell’s report (refer to item 7 a, Specific Items – Report from District Councillor Sophie Bell) she states that she had spoken to EHDC about the vandalised brick work on the Mill Building and that they had informed her that it is the responsibility of the landowner to facilitate repairs.

The Clerk said she had also e-mailed the District Council about the Mill building and received the following e-mail on 5th February, from Kim Bowers (Planning Enforcement Officer, EHDC)

“Thank you for your enquiry regarding the above site.

This site was previously secured however, it is ultimately the responsibility of the registered land owner to address any issues and not a matter for this council. I have written advising that the breeze block has been broken through.

Any antisocial behaviour should be reported to the police in the first instance.”

PCSO Sally Brooks asked the Parish Council to forward her the contact details for the owner of the Mill site so that the Police can serve him with a Community Protection Notice (CPN) asking him to make the building secure again. CPN’s are issued to prevent unreasonable behaviour that is having a negative impact on the local community’s quality of life and securing the breach in the Mill building would come under this notice.

The Clerk to forward the contact details for the Mill building owner to PCSO Sally Brooks.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Vandalism to the outsider toilets**

PCSO Sally Brooks explained that any CCTV images available from the Community Hall cameras could not be used as they only show what was happening outside the external toilets and not inside. Although one could surmise who caused the damage by seeing who had entered the external toilets, the CCTV images could not be used for prosecution purposes as no evidence of any wrong doing would be available.

Sally Brooks left the meeting.

b) Review of actions

None.

c) Action points resolved

1. E-mail Parish Councillors the HCC summary report re Station Road & High Street traffic schemes
2. See if the Library has an entry in the village directory and if not add one
3. Contact supplier re example illustrations of commemorative plaque
4. Send completed precept form to East Herts District Council
5. Contact Santander re change of Community Hall Tennis Club Fund bank account name
6. **Contact D. P. Electrics re annual emergency lighting and PAT testing**
Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall – Annual emergency lighting and PAT testing.
7. Produce notice advising of outside toilet closure
8. Include toilet closure notice in the next issue of the Parish News and post on Facebook page
9. Liaise with members of the Environment Sub-Committee re date for site meeting
10. Discuss extra work to War Memorial garden at the Environment Sub-Committee site meeting
11. Obtain a quotation for reproducing the Watton Green information board artwork from Jono Meischke
12. **See if Adam Welch has cleared the leaves at the bottom of Station Road as instructed – outstanding.**
Mrs. Dinnin said she would be meeting with Adam Welch on site this week and was forced to cancel her first meeting with him due to snow on the ground. **Action: C. Dinnin**
13. Fit a replacement litterbin at the tennis courts from our existing old stock
refer to item 8 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee - Rubbish bin at Tennis Court.
14. Chase Lindsey Holt (Woodhall Estate) for an update on repairs to the Chestnuts fence
15. Contact the new owner of 'Crumbs' re updating their website entry
16. Give the Clerk the contact details for the new owner of 'Crumbs'
17. Contact Mr. Morey to ask him if he wishes to take over the filling of the dog waste bag dispenser again
CD bags are full
18. **Write library entry in the next edition of the Parish News**
Mrs. Dinnin said she did write an entry for the Parish News, but it did not appear in the February edition. She hoped that it would be included in the March edition.

6. Planning

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

The applications below were dealt with in accordance with the Parish Council's Planning Protocol.

a) Applications

i) HCC depot, Station Road (3/18/2764/OUT)

Outline application for the erection of 14 residential units and 26 proposed car parking spaces (all matters reserved except access)

Mrs. Stanley said that following consultation with Parish Councillors, the following letter was sent to the planning department.

'The Parish Council supports this application.

They consider that this brownfield site is very suitable for redevelopment, having been left unused for some considerable time. This is the only large brown field site within the village boundary which could be used for residential development and we would welcome the material contribution which it would make to the housing development targets allocated to the village by the East Herts District Plan.'

Dr. Waltham explained the role of the Neighbourhood Plan to the two members of public present at the meeting and the benefits it will have for Watton-at-Stone.

She then explained that the depot-site is the only brownfield site in the village and that it will need a change-of-use before it can be considered for housing development. The site is a difficult one as it is restricted by the fact that the main sewer goes through it and there are several mature trees on the site, which limits the number of properties that can be built. She added that if the site is not developed, then it might revert to being used as a depot with all the associated noises it would bring, like lorries entering the site in the early hours of the morning.

ii) 4 Rectory Lane (3/19/0023/HH)

Detached granny annex within curtilage of garden

The plans for this application were e-mailed to all Parish Councillors. After e-mail consultation Parish Councillors were unanimous in their strong objections and the following letter was sent to the planning department.

“The Parish Council views this application as detrimental to the historic layout of social housing mid twentieth century and furthermore detrimental to the enjoyment of residents who bought into this housing environment.

We have recently objected to similar development applications which we see not only as damaging but as setting precedents in the area. We understand there is a shortage of housing and are addressing it through the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.”

The following planning application was e-mailed to the Parish Council after the February agenda was published.

- **The Bull, 113 High Street (3/19/0236/LBC)**

Single storey rear extension to include minor internal alterations

Mrs. Stanley said that this application is for the removal of the outside covered eating area, replacing it with a single storey extension. Unlike the previous application, which was withdrawn, it does not reduce the car parking area but remains within the footprint of the current outdoor eating area.

After discussion, Parish Council agreed to support the application in principal, but residents were concerned that another outdoor eating area might be erected bringing the associated noise and smells closer to them. In addition, the increase in the number of customers would require additional parking and no provision for this had been made in the grounds of The Bull. The Parish Council was concerned that this would result in increased overflow parking on the High Street which was already severely congested at peak times.

It was agreed that Mrs. Stanley will notify by letter all the residents affected by this application and the Parish Council will take into account any comments they receive before responding.

Mrs. Stanley agreed to send out letters to the residents affected and e-mail any comments received. She will then draft a letter the planning department for Parish Council approval via e-mail. **Action: M. Stanley**

b) Decisions**i) Watton Scout Hut, Mill Lane (3/18/1833/FUL)**

Erection of new garage

-East Herts Council - granted

ii) Land rear of 35, 37, 37a Station Road (3/18/2718/FUL)

Erection of two new two-bedroom two storey dwellings with associated parking spaces

-East Herts Council – refused

Mrs. Stanley then read out the reasons for refusal.

iii) Land adjacent Ponderosa, Perrywood Lane (3/18/2479/FUL)

Clearing and levelling of contaminated site including removal of hard standings. Construction of 1 no. 3 bedroom dwelling and garage

-East Herts Council – refused

Mrs. Stanley then read out the reasons for refusal.

The following decision was e-mailed to the Parish Council after the February agenda was published.

- **Land rear of 2 Rectory Lane (3/18/2696/FUL)**

Erection of two new two-bedroom two storey dwellings with associated parking spaces

-East Herts Council – refused

Mrs. Stanley then read out the reasons for refusal.

7. Specific items**a) Report from District Councillor Sophie Bell**

District Councillor Sophie Bell e-mailed the following report to the Clerk on 12th February.

“I'm afraid I'm going to have to give the meeting a miss tomorrow as there's a council meeting. I don't have a significant amount to report, but the EHDC Councillor report is as follows:

1. Problems with pathways in Great Innings South are being resolved by Clarion.
2. Having spoken to Clarion Housing Association, they confirm that there is a high demand for properties at Glebe Court, and that current supply does not appear to be meeting this demand.
3. I have been working with John James of Perrywood Lane regarding the rejection of his planning proposals, and the best way of getting the applications approved when he resubmits them.
4. I have been keeping an eye on the old Mill Building and would like it to be noted that when I spoke to EHDC about mending the building, they said that it was the responsibility of the landowner. Fortunately, as of my last walk in the area, no further vandalism seemed to have taken place, and with any luck now that the property is on the market, the land will be returned to practical use in the not so distant future.

5. There is an issue with young people hanging out in the woods behind Great Innings. There is a lot of rubbish in the woods which are remnants of this, and I also found evidence of drug use. I have made EHDC aware of the issue, and they said they will look into it, and will monitor the area - although they indicate that they plan on doing this later in the year when activity is likely to be more frequent as the weather improves.”
- **Trains service**
Mr Stock said that it was unfortunate (but understandable) that Sophie was unable to attend our meeting, because he was hoping for an update on the current situation re the rail-replacement bus service to and from Stevenage; which we believe is to be introduced this May. This subject will be raised with Sophie during our meeting in March, if not before.
- b) Station road update**
Apart from those made himself during our previous meeting, Mr. Stock did not receive any comments or matters arising from the HCC’s ‘Station Road and High Street Traffic Calming Phase 1’ report that he e-mailed to all Parish Councillors.
Because of this and that there did not appear to be any new issues in Station Road at present, he proposed that this item be removed from our Agenda until the Parish Council meeting in June. This was agreed by all present. **Agenda: 06/2019**
- c) Neighbourhood plan – progress report**
- Mrs. Hammon arrived at the meeting.
Dr. Waltham said that the Steering Group will be meeting with the Woodhall Estate tomorrow. They will present them with their master plan and hope in doing so they find some common ground.
If the Woodhall Estate are willing to engage with the Steering Group, they will meet again to discuss the revised plans before any the public exhibition takes place to present the Neighbourhood Plan. The Steering Group are committed in getting the maximum benefits for the village from any potential developers.
Charles Clark has written an article, which is to be published on the in the March edition of the Parish News and uploaded to their website, updating parishioners on the current status of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- d) Footpaths**
Mr. Stock reported on this item in the absence of Mr. Block.
We were pleased to receive a copy of HCC’s draft report on ‘Footway Improvements - Watton-at-Stone’ from County Councillor Ken Crofton on 8 February; addressed to Mr. Block for comment. Mr. Block then briefly discussed this with Mr. Stock before passing a copy to all Parish Councillors.
Mr. Stock e-mailed Ken Crofton on 10 February to express his disappointment and concern that although mentioned in the Executive Summary of the report, the extremely poor state of the footpaths in Hazeldell had not been addressed in the draft document; even though during the first site-meeting, which triggered the actions on which on which the report is based, it was acknowledged by those present that there were significant issues to be addressed in Hazeldell (as previously reported on by Mr. Stock). We await a response.
No comments on the report were received from Parish Councillors so Mr. Block and Mr. Stock are to meet to review the report in detail and then let Ken Crofton have their comments accordingly. **Action: S. Block/D. Stock**
There are some questions to be resolved about funding and this will be discussed further by Parish Councillors during our meeting in March.
- e) Commemorative plaques**
Mr. Smith had received an illustration from the supplier of how the plaque that we propose would look. However, Mr. Stock showed this to Parish Councillors and expressed his concerns about the large size of the plaque and some other aspects that need to be addressed with the supplier. **Action: D. Stock**
It was agreed that the plaque should still be oval in shape but of a size that will sit comfortably with the existing ‘Nigel Poulton Community Hall’ sign on the outside of the building.
- f) Streetlight update**
It was agreed to chase Mark Burrow, who is acting on behalf of HCC, to find out when the legal agreement to transfer the Parish Council owned streetlights over to HCC ownership will be ready. **Action: J. Allsop**
- g) May 2019 meeting date**
The Clerk said that the District and Parish Council elections are being held on Thursday 2nd May 2019. It is a legal requirement that the Parish Council meet within 14 days of the election and therefore they need to move the May 2019 meeting forward by one week to the 14th May.

8. Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

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

- **Monthly accounts**

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty cash - Payments	
None		None	
Cheques issued			
Marine Goudoffre	2 illustration		1,500.00
Community Hall	½ year grant		3,680.00
Govrescources Ltd	Neighbourhood Plan to 12.18 - consultation work		1,200.00
Wages and salary	£11 mobile phone		
Allotment Association	Public liability insurance cover		81.20
Jane Allsop	stamps and watton-pc.org.uk domain name		20.03
Consort Media	Produce 2 copies of Watton Green information board		<u>108.00</u>
			7,843.62
Cheques received			
Lydia Butcher	Allotment rent for year 2018/19		75.00
Joanne Moore	Allotment rent for year 2018/19		75.00
Hayley Sharp	Allotment rent for year 2018/19		69.00
			219.00

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
Tony Silvestri - Pavilion (3 weeks)	30.00	Philip Smith – travel expenses	27.00
Youth Girls Football - Main Hall hire	40.00	JSM Archery – Archery instruction	105.00
Donation for use of toys	5.00	Tony Silvestri – Yoga instruction	<u>54.00</u>
Danny Potts – Main Hall & Pavilion	45.00		186.00
Floodlighting donations	180.00		
Active East Herts - December	<u>462.00</u>		
	762.00		
Cheques issued			
Jane Allsop (Equip4 Work)	White board		235.20
D. P. Electrics	emergency lighting and PAT testing		160.00
Wages	Cleaning – January 2019		381.02
			776.22
Cheques received			
Tumble Tots	Main Hall hire – January 2019		160.00
Elayne Morgan	Main Hall and Pavilion		63.00
Felicitas Dixon	Main Hall and Pavilion		<u>22.00</u>
			245.00

Parish Councillors agreed the payments.

- **Transfer of funds to deposit accounts**

The Clerk has transferred £15,000 from the Parish Council's current account to its deposit account and £10,000 from the Community Hall current account into the Community Hall (Tennis Club) fund account. The transferred funds will now incur interest each month.

- **Change of bank account name**

The Clerk spoke to Santander who advised her that the Watton at Stone Community Hall Tennis Club Fund accounts could be renamed. She faxed them a letter, signed by two authorised signatories, requesting the account name is changed to the Watton at Stone Community Hall Fund (deleting the words Tennis Club). However, to date no acknowledgment has been received.

The Clerk to chase Santander.

Action: J. Allsop

Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Meischke reported on the following items

- **Path around Community Hall**
Mark Blacktin has levelled the uneven paving slabs around the Community Hall.
- **Hall hire**
Mr. Meischke said that two regular hirers have now ceased using the Community Hall. Vacancies now exist on a Tuesday evening and Thursday morning. However, we have some enquiries to fill these slots. However, if they are not filled soon, we could advertise on the Parish Council website, Parish News and on Facebook.
- **Annual emergency lighting and PAT testing**
The Annual emergency lighting and PAT testing has been completed by D. P. Electrics.
- **EHDC - Rate relief form**
Mr. Meischke, Mrs. McCash and the Clerk have completed and returned the rates relief form, which entitles the Community Hall to 80% relief.
- **White board**
The new magnetic white board/projector screen has been installed in the meeting room. The first board delivered was damaged and the suppliers asked us to dispose of the board, which has now been donated to the school.

Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee

In the absence of Mr. Knight, Mr. Meischke reported on the following items.

- **Floodlighting Bulb**
The floodlighting bulb in the far corner of the old double courts needs replacement. The total cost for supply and installation is £288 including VAT of which the bulb cost is £140.
Parish Councillors agreed to replace the floodlighting bulb. **Action: I. Knight**
- **Tennis Club Notice Board**
The Tennis Club would like to purchase and install a new notice board at the tennis courts, with the same specification as the last board ordered by the Parish Council from XL Displays. The cost of the notice board is approximately £650 excluding VAT.
The notice board would be freestanding and not attached to the fencing. Parish Councillors agreed to purchase the notice board, which will remain in their ownership, and the Tennis Club will give them a donation to cover the net value.
Mr. Knight to meet with Mr. Meischke to agree the siting of the board and arrange for it to be ordered.
Action: I. Knight/J. Meischke
The Tennis Club will arrange for Mark Blacktin to install the notice board and will pay for the installation.
- **Boot brushes**
The boot brushes require replacement and were last changed approximately 18 months ago. The cost of two sets of brushes is around £200, including VAT, for two sets.
Parish Councillors discussed why the Parish Council should be responsible for paying for the boot brushes and not the Sports and Social Club. In his report, Mr. Knight said that it is a benefit to the Parish Council as it will reduce mud on the Tennis Courts (less frequent cleaning) and help with changing rooms condition.
Parish Councillors agreed to the purchase two sets of boot brushes. **Action: I. Knight/J. Allsop**
The responsibility of purchasing boot brushes to be discussed at a meeting later in the year when more Parish Councillors are present. Mr. Block to consider making a provision for replacing boot brushes in the 2020/21 budget. **Agenda: 10/2019**
- **Rubbish Bin**
The rubbish bin by the tennis courts needs reinstalling because it was removed when the new tennis court fencing was installed. Mr. Knight has requested that a lidded bin is installed to stop the jackdaws removing the rubbish.
Mr. Meischke to discuss with Mr. Block if it is possible to purchase one or more lidded litterbins, the same style as the 11 Glasdon bins that were recently installed around the village. **Action: J. Meischke/S. Block**

Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following item.

- **War Memorial site meeting**

Mrs. Dinnin together with Mr. Stock, Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke had a site meeting at the War Memorial on 22nd January. The purpose being to review the overall site and decide what work needed to be undertaken to improve its overall appearance.

As a result, Mr. Stock was given an action to produce a sketch of the site to illustrate and identify the works proposed. He produced two versions which were shown to the Parish Councillors (the only difference between the two being the materials used for the inner section of the memorial). It was agreed to adopt the scheme in which resin-bonded gravel is to be used in the centre section of the memorial.

He then explained the proposed works in detail.

The scheme that was agreed includes the following:

- adjusting/levelling the existing paving as required and then cleaning
- installing resin-bonded gravel in the inner part of the memorial (i.e. between the memorial and the edge of the existing paving slabs)
- installing kerbing along the entire front edge of the site where it meets the footpath
- installing a concrete base for the remembrance seat (new)
- stripping out the existing planting at the front of the site to give it an open aspect and re-plant with 'low-level colour' to add interest (the remaining hedging thus providing a horseshoe-shaped boundary to the site)
- installing two planters at the front of the site to accommodate seasonal flowers
- reviewing the existing planting to tidy it up and replace as necessary to improve the overall appearance of the site throughout the year.

It was agreed to obtain quotations for the groundwork (which does not include new planting) after meeting with prospective contractors on site. **Action: C. Dinnin/D. Stock/M. Smith**

- **Allotments**

Mrs. Dinnin said she had allocated all the allotment plots. Since doing this, one person has applied for a plot and is now on the waiting list.

The fence at the rear of Chestnuts, which is falling into the allotments, has still not been repaired by the Woodhall Estate.

Dr. Waltham and Mrs. Hammon agreed to ask Linsey Holt (Woodhall Estate) for an update when they meet with her tomorrow night. **Action: E. Waltham/C. Hammon**

- **Watton Green**

Mrs. Dinnin was pleased to report that Jono Meischke had found the artwork for the Information board sign and arranged for Consort Media to produce two copies of the sign on weatherproof Dibond at a cost of £90 plus VAT. Mr. Meischke showed Parish Councillors the new signs.

- **Lammas**

- **Information board**

The information board needs repairing, although the sign is still in good order. Mrs. Dinnin to liaise with Mr. Smith to get the work to be done. **Action: C. Dinnin**

- **Byelaw sign**

The Byelaw sign needs replacing. Mrs. Dinnin and the Clerk to arrange for this to be done.

Action: C. Dinnin/ J. Allsop

- **Logs on the Lammas**

Mrs. Dinnin was pleased to report that members of the public are helping themselves to the logs on the Lammas.

b) Routine Reports

i) Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests

Mr. Meischke did the above tests with the Archery group on Monday afternoon.

ii) Gas and electricity meter readings

Mr. Meischke gives the Clerk gas and electricity meter readings at the end of each month and she uploads these readings to the providers websites.

iii) Weekly reports - Fire Inspection and shower tests

Mr. Meischke has replaced a cable tie on one of the fire extinguishers as it was broken.

iv) Health and Safety for Community Hall

None.

v) Monthly village-report

Mrs. Dinnin completed the report on 11th February 2019 and reported on the negative items highlighted in the monthly village-report.

• Play area:

- seat by large swings needs replacing. It was agreed this seat should be removed and replaced when the new safety surface under the rainbow multi-play and slide is installed. **Action: J. Meischke**
- large swings – safety surface dips under swings
- supernova/junior climbing frame – few puddles under equipment and muddy – Winter!

• Tennis court litterbin needs reinstating, on ground.**Action: I. Knight/J. Meischke**

- **Allotments:** several new tenants, at the Glebe Court end, were issued plots early in 2019. These plots are currently not in good condition but hopefully they will improve; we now need to be patient.

• Recycle clothes bin: full and needs emptying.

- **Defibrillator:** Mrs. Dinnin said that it had been suggested to her that someone should be trained to use the defibrillator. Mr. Meischke said that the defibrillator is designed to be used by any member of the public and that the emergency services take you through each step on the phone.

vi) Weekly sportsfield

None.

vii) Website/Facebook

none.

viii) Highway and Lighting faults

Mrs. Stanley said that the drain cover by the High Street/Station Road roundabout is sinking again. The Clerk to report to highways.

Action: J. Allsop**ix) Dog fouling reports**

None.

x) Police reports

Refer to Police report directly after item 5 a, minutes of last meeting

9. Correspondence received**a) EHDC re The Old Mill, Mill Lane**

Refer to Police report, directly after item 5 a, Minutes of last meeting.

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

Mr. Stock said that he would be attending the meeting of the War Memorial Hall management committee next week.

11. Items for Parish News

None.

The meeting closed 2110.

The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 19th March 2019.