

**Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

<b>Present:</b>	Mr. Mike Smith (Chairman)	Mr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman)
	Mr. Stephen Block	Mrs. Christine Dinnin
	Mrs. Catherine Hammon	Mr. Ian Knight
	Mrs. Helen McCash,	Mr. David Stock
	Mrs. Jane Allsop (Clerk)	
<b>Public:</b>	District Councillor Sophie Bell (1920), County Councillor Ken Crofton	
<b>Police:</b>	PC Paul Chapman and PCSO Sally Brooks (until 1930)	

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence: Mrs. Margaret Stanley, and Dr. Emma Waltham.

**2. Public Participation**

**Report from District Councillor Sophie Bell**

Mr. Smith invited District Councillor Sophie Bell to give her report.

Sophie Bell reported on the following items.

- **Trains service**
  - The new trains have been introduced to the Watton-at-Stone line.
  - Work on the 5<sup>th</sup> platform at Stevenage is progressing well.
  - The related rail-replacement bus services are due will begin in the middle of May.
- **Great Innings estate**
  - EHDC are scheduled to clear up rubbish and repair broken fencing in the woodland area at the back of the Great Innings.
  - Clarins Housing Association have surveyed their garages and repair work required will be carried out soon.
  - EHDC have been called in to resolve a rat problem in Great Innings South. Although this house is in private ownership, it is affecting other properties in the area.
- **Mill Lane**

Pressuring EHDC to have the Mill building made safe.

PCSO Sally Brooks said that Sergeant Duncan Smith has been in contact with the owner who agreed to make the building safe and the work required has now been completed.

Sophie bell left the meeting.

**Police Report**

Mr. Smith welcomed PC Paul Chapman and PCSO Sally Brooks to the meeting and invited them to give their report on Policing matters.

PCSO Sally Brooks introduced PC Paul Chapman to Parish Councillors.

PC Paul Chapman said that there has been a shortfall of officers for the last 8 months since PC Nick Musto, who covered the Watton-at-Stone area, went on long-term sick leave. PC Chapman said that as well as his own duties, he is now covering the duties of PC Musto. For the moment policing numbers will remain strangled until either PC Musto returns to duties or another officer is appointed.

PCSO Brooks took PC Chapman around the parish of Watton-at-Stone today and gave him some basic knowledge of the area.

Although PC Chapman won't be around as much as the Parish Council would like, especially as it took him an hour to get from where he is based to Watton-at-Stone, he hoped police coverage will improve for the village.

PCSO Sally Brooks said that are no crimes to report since her last report at the March Parish Council meeting apart from the Youth incident at the Community Hall car park, which the Clerk reported to her last week. Mr. Meischke said that the Youths involved in this incident were around the 12-14-year-old age group and were not prepared to take notice of what an adult had to say. Mrs. Dinnin said the Youths have also started to do gawn to the Lammas and there is an increase in litter in this area now that the weather has improved.

Mr. Meischke said that we have gone through several years of vandalism being quite low in the village and it looks as though things are about to change with the current set of youths. PCSO Brooks said that she would ensure that the police visit the usual youth hot spots in the village on a regular basis.

PC Paul Chapman and PCSO Sally Brooks left the meeting.

### 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 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019**  
Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved.

#### b) Review of actions

1. **Arrange for a lidded litter bin to be fitted at the Church Lane end of footpath 17**  
Refer to item 7 d, Specific items – Litterbins.
2. **Order 11 lidded litterbins from Glasdon UK Limited**  
Refer to item 7 d, Specific items – Litterbins.
3. **See if a large bin will fit at the Rectory Lane end of this footpath**  
Refer to item 7 d, Specific items – Litterbins.

#### c) Action points resolved

1. E-mail District Councillor Sophie Bell re Train and bus service update, speed-aware and Mill building
2. E-mail County Councillor Ken Crofton regarding funding streams for footpath improvements
3. Write to Green King Brewing and Retailing Limited re George and Dragon Public House
4. Find out information re VETS training and write Parish News article
5. Upload revised Risk Assessment and Financial Management document to the Watton-at-Stone website
6. E-mail a copy of the revised Asset Register to all Parish Councillors
7. Submit Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 to Stuart McCash for the internal audit
8. Submit Community Hall accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 to McCash and Hay for audit
9. Ensure that D. P. Electrics fit new LED egress light at the tennis courts
10. Liaise with Mark Blacktin re installation of Tennis Court notice board
11. Give Mr. Knight the contact details for Mr. Cox's re 8-a-side football
12. Contact fitness trainer Ben Talbot re use of sportsfield and toilet/small changing room facilities
13. Arrange site meeting with Adam Welch re work at War Memorial site
14. Contact Lindsay Holt re fence panel facing the wrong way on the allotments
15. Inform Mark Blacktin that Mr. Smith has the timber for the allotment fence required for the car park area
16. Liaise with Mr. Smith re repairs required to the Lammas Information Board
17. Arrange for the artwork on the Lammas Information Board to be digitally scanned
18. Investigate the option of making the Information Board framework out of recycled plastic rather than wood
19. Collect and pay for the replacement Byelaw sign for the Lammas from 1<sup>st</sup> Call signs
20. Draw up plans for the sportsfield area for discussion at the next Steering Group meeting
21. Arrange a date for Parish Councillors and the Steering Group to meet
22. Upload article written by Mr. Smith re V.E.T.S Defibrillator training
23. Ask District Councillor Sophie Bell to keep us updated on all train and bus service issues
24. Take Parish Councillors completed nomination papers into East Herts Council
25. Forward article re V.E.T.S Defibrillator training to Parish News

### 6. Planning

Mr. Smith reported on the following items.

#### a) Applications

None.

#### b) Decisions

##### i) 4 Rectory Lane (3/19/0023/HH)

Detached granny annex within curtilage of garden

- East Herts Council - refused

The following appeals were e-mailed to the Parish Council after the April agenda was published.

- **Land rear of 35, 37, 37a Station Road 3/18/2718/FUL (LPA Appeal reference 19/00070/REFUSE)**  
Erection of detached two-bedroom two storey house and cycle and garden store with creation of 2 parking spaces with proposed new access
- **29 High Street (3/18/2214/HH)**  
Raising roof ridge. Creation of 1 no. rear dormer window, insertion of 2 no rooflights and 2 no. sun pipes.  
Parish Councillor agreed that they did not wish to make any additional comments on either of the above two planning appeals and their original responses stand. No action is required.

## 7. Specific items

### a) Report from District Councillor Sophie Bell

refer to item 2, Public participation.

### b) Neighbourhood plan – progress report

Mrs. Hammon said that the Steering Group have not met again since they last reported to the Parish Council.

Parish Councillors will be meeting with the Steering Group on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> April to discuss various issues concerning the Neighbourhood plan.

Consultant Jacqueline Veater (Govresources Limited) has been paid a second payment for consultation work from the grant money awarded to the Neighbourhood Plan. The Steering Group are expecting that the Parish Council will need to return the grant funds that were not spent at the end of the financial year (31<sup>st</sup> March 2019).

Mrs. Hammon said that the launch for grant funding for the current financial year has been delayed and might not open until mid-May. Funding won't be granted for work that has already been done so Jacqueline can't do work which we don't have funds in hand for. She said that the worst-case scenario would be that there would not be sufficient funds available for the preparatory work and printing for the main public consultation in the village in mid-June. She said there are two options available, one is for the Parish Council to bridge the gap in funding from the New Homes Bonus funds and the other is to delay the public consultation until funds are in place. Parish Councillors preferred the idea of delaying the public consultation but agreed to discuss this further at their meeting with the Steering Group on 24<sup>th</sup> April.

**Update:** It has since been announced that unspent funds from the last financial year can be carried over to be spent in the current financial year. This should largely remove the funding gap problem as regards Ms. Veater's work.

### c) Footpaths

Mr. Block said that he had e-mailed County Councillor Ken Crofton, as agreed at the March Parish Council meeting. Ken Crofton said that all highways money and his locality budget are committed for 2019/20, but he hopes to be able to include the funding of the High street footpath upgrades from his 2020/2021 locality budget.

### d) Litterbins

Mr. Block said that there is insufficient room to fit a large bin on the footpath that runs beside the school (Footpath 17) at the Rectory Lane end. He said he would therefore be fitting a post mounted lidded litterbin at this site.

The 11 litterbins are on order from Glasdon UK and delivery is expected tomorrow (17<sup>th</sup> April).

### e) Commemorative plaques

Mr. Stock and Mr. Meischke have fitted the plaque (commemorating Nigel Poulton and Michael Freeman) to the outside wall of the Community Hall and adjacent to the right-hand side of the main entrance. Mr. Smith thanked Mr. Stock for his work on the plaque and said that it looked good in-situ.

### f) Streetlight – transfer of ownership agreement

All Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of the legal agreement to transfer the Parish Council owned streetlights to HCC ownership. HCC have produced two hardcopies of the agreement, which Parish Councillors agreed should now be signed. Mr. Smith duly signed both copies of the agreement, with the Clerk as witness. The Clerk to post the signed agreements back to HCC. **Action: J. Allsop**

### g) George and Dragon Public house

Mr. Smith said that following a spate of letters and e-mails between himself and Green King Brewing and Retailing Limited), he has now spoken to a woman from the brewery who reassured him of their commitment to getting a permanent tenant to secure the future of the George and Dragon public house. In the meantime, to keep the pub open, they have got a management team running the pub.

### h) V.E.T.S Defibrillator training

Mr. Smith said that notices have been put on the Parish Council website and on Facebook, advertising the defibrillator training and two people have shown an interest in the training.

It was agreed to change the title change of the article to make 'Defibrillator training' dominant as the usage of V.E.T.S may be detracting people coming forward.

### i) Traffic along the High Street

At the September 2018 Parish Council meeting it was agreed to let everything settle down and take 'Traffic along the High Street' off the Parish Council agenda until March 2019. However, it got missed off the March agenda. It was agreed to defer this item until the June agenda. **Agenda: 06/2019**

### j) Renovation Red K6 kiosk that houses the defibrillator

At the September 2018 Parish Council meeting it was agreed to defer this item until Spring.

Mrs. Hammon said that she would ask her decorator if he is interested in quoting to refurbish the kiosk.

**Action: C. Hammon**

**k) Scouts**

Mr. Smith and Mrs. Dinnin met with Richard Wing (Watton-at-Stone Scout and Guide Group) re their Mill Lane facilities and the potential merging of scout and football facilities if adult football moves to Mill Lane.

Mr. Smith and Mrs. Dinnin discussed with Mr. Wing the Parish Council’s plan to bring youth football back to the village. If the adult football moves to Mill Lane it would be good to obtain the Mill site to incorporate both the scouts and changing rooms for the footballers. This could free up the area of the current scout building for additional car parking.

The sportsfield and Community Hall building desperately need additional car parking. Moving adult football away from the sportsfield would allow the swings to be relocated further into the field and enable the car park to be enlarged, whilst still providing two junior football pitches.

Mr. Smith outlined the potential funding costs for the purchase of the Mill Lane site plus levelling ground works for the football pitch. A building on the Mill Lane site could include facilities for both the Scouts and changing room facilities for the Footballers. Implications about child safety would need to be ensured if both groups are using the one facility.

Mr. Smith said that he had not been aware before that it is the youth football and not the adult football that hold a large amount funds raised for football facilities. There are currently 149 youth players belonging to the club.

Mr. Knight said he would get all the Watton-at-Stone Football Clubs together to discuss the options.

Mr. Smith agreed to put a briefing together for Mr. Knight to present to the Football Clubs.

**Action: I. Knight/M. Smith**

**8. Reports**

**a) Sub-Committees**

**Budget & Finance**

Mr. Block reported on the following items.

- **Monthly accounts**

**Watton-at-Stone Parish Council**

<b>Petty Cash – Receipts</b>		<b>Petty cash - Payments</b>	
None		None	
<b>Cheques issued</b>			
HMRC	NI contributions for Clerk and PC		217.74
Hertfordshire County Council	Streetlight conversion to LED lamps		9,000.00
Jane Allsop	2 invoices: 1st call signs + printer cartridges		82.64
Wages and Salaries	March 2019		1254.39
Adam Welch	Leaf clearance		200.00
David Payne	Work around sportsfield		45.50
BT phone calls	BT phone calls - Sept 2018 to March 2018		107.13
Govresources Ltd	Neighbourhood Plan to 31.03.19 - 2 days consultation work		<u>1,200.00</u>
			<b><u>12,107.40</u></b>
<b>Cheques received</b>			
Debra Freeman	Donation towards seat		849.00
HMRC	VAT return for period 02.2018 to 02.2019		<u>5,204.80</u>
			<b><u>6,053.80</u></b>

**Watton-at-Stone Community Hall**

<b>Petty Cash – Receipts</b>		<b>Petty Cash -Payments</b>	
Tony Silvestri - Pavilion (3 weeks)	20.00	Archery Company	10.06
Youth Girls Football - Main Hall hire	20.00	Philip Smith – travel expenses	40.50
Ruth Dunham – Main Hall & Pavilion	75.00	JSM Archery – Archery instruction	40.00
Floodlighting donations	109.00	Tony Silvestri – Yoga instruction	<u>100.00</u>
Active East Herts - December	<u>493.00</u>		<b><u>190.56</u></b>
	<b><u>717.00</u></b>		
<b>Cheques issued</b>			
Hertfordshire County Council	Cleaning materials		44.82
Castle Water	Waste water		20.75
Abacus	Safety surface under Rainbow play area		7,062.53
Wages	March 2019		389.64
Floodlighting	Replace floodlighting bulb		288.00
Hertfordshire County Council	Cleaning materials		103.50
			<b><u>7,909.24</u></b>

Cheques received		
Katie Camp	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	83.00
Parish Council	NHB grant for safety surface	5,885.44
Watton Ramblers	Pavilion	7.00
Watton Youth Drop Inn	Main Hall & Pavilion - Jan - March	127.50
Herts County Markets	Pavilion & Meeting room	48.00
		<u>6,150.94</u>

Parish Councillors agreed the payments.

- 12-monthly statement of accounts for the Parish Council and Community Hall for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019**

Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of the Parish Council and Community Hall statement of accounts for the year ending the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

Mr. Block highlighted the main expenditure and income items for both the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts and explained the variations in the statements.

A summarised version of the 12-monthly statement of accounts for the Parish Council and Community Hall for the year ended 2018/19, will be presented at the Annual Parish meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May. **Action: J. Allsop**

- PKF Littlejohn – external audit papers for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019**

PKF Littlejohn e-mailed, on 27<sup>th</sup> March, informing us of the details for the annual audit for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. The public inspection period starts on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> June and ends on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> July.

The completed Annual Return and all relevant documentation needs to be sent to PKF Littlejohn by 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019. **Action: J. Allsop**

The Clerk said she had submitting the Parish Council accounts for the year end 31/03/2019 to Stuart McCash for the internal audit.

- Update Asset registers for 2018/19**

Mrs. McCash said that because the streetlights agreement had not been signed before the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, they need to remain on the Asset register for 2018/19. The Clerk to amend the asset register to include the streetlights. **Action: J. Allsop**

- Microsoft software**

The Microsoft 365 software on the Parish Council’s Dell laptop automatically renewed at the beginning of April and payment of £59.99 was taken from the Clerk’s credit card. It was agreed to reimburse the Clerk accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**

- Renewal of memberships for CDA for Herts and CPRE**

It was agreed to renew the annual subscriptions for CDA for Herts, CPRE. **Action: J. Allsop**

- Annual Insurance**

BHIB Insurance have submitted their annual insurance renewal papers. They will need to be informed that the Parish Council no longer require cover for the street lighting and request a revised quotation. The LTA on our current policy expires on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019. It was therefore agreed to try and obtain alternative quotations that cover both the Parish Council and Community Hall under one policy. Zurich also quoted for similar cover three years ago and it was agreed to contact them again. **Action: J. Allsop**

### Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Meischke reported on the following items

- Youth problems outside the hall**

There has been a recent spate of youth vandalism down at the Community Hall. Mr. Meischke said that they were attaching the outside toilet door, banging it with footballs and charging at the door to try and break the magnetic lock. He asked David Payne to go down to the hall to investigate and although David is a very tall and imposing person, the youths took little notice of his request to disband.

Mr. Meischke said that although there is CCTV that covers this area, he felt that it would be of little use to the police. PCSO Sally Brooks was made aware of the incident via e-mail.

- Heating**

Mr. Meischke said that James Turner Limited will be repairing a leaking union on the pressurized heating system this Thursday (18<sup>th</sup> April).

### Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- Youth Football**

Mr. Knight said that we received a request from Duncan Cox re the use of the sportsfield for 8-a-side football. This is a domestic football issue as the team that Duncan Cox manages is part of the Sports and Social Club. He will therefore need to speak to the existing teams to find out if they use the football pitch on Saturday mornings and if the Football Association would allow 8-a-side pitch makings on the full side football pitch.

- **Tennis Courts**

The replacement floodlighting bulb has been fitted and the courts have been pressure washed.

The aggregate around the court needs weeding and clearing. Mr. Meischke agreed to ask David Payne to do this work

**Action: J. Meischke**

The Tennis Club notice board has been delivered and Mr. Knight will arrange for Mark Blacktin to install it.

**Action: I. Knight**

Unfortunately, as happened with the Community Hall's white board, the first notice board delivered was damaged, however the second board was fine. XL Displays asked the Parish Council to dispose of the notice board. However, it may still be usable in a position where the damage will not be visible. Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke to inspect the board to see if the Parish Council has a use for it. Mr. Knight and Mrs. McCash said that if the Parish Council does not need it, the Church would be happy to take it.

## Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following item.

- **War Memorial**

Mr. Stock said that he had eventually received the last of the 3 quotations for the proposed groundwork to the site; the highest being £5,060 and the lowest £3,057 (not including the VAT). Due to the differences in detail therein, Mr. Stock, Mrs. Dinnin and Mr. Meischke are to have a further site meeting with the provider of the lowest quote to ensure and verify that the specification for the work to be undertaken is fully understood.

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

To this end, and prior to the meeting, Mr. Stock will produce a modified drawing which concentrates only on the groundwork to be undertaken on this phase of the planned improvements to the War Memorial site.

**Action: D. Stock**

Mr. Stock and Mrs. Dinnin met with Adam Welch asking him to quote to cut the hedge down to a size that is consistent around the boundary of the site, remove/reduce certain shrubs and do other clearance work prior to the start of the proposed groundworks. We await the response from Adam Welch.

Ken Crofton said that there may be some War Memorial grants available. Although it was pointed out that no work is being done to the actual War Memorial, the possibility of a grant is to be investigated by Mr. Smith.

**Action: M. Smith**

- **Allotments**

Mrs. Dinnin said that Mark Blacktin had submitted a quotation of £80 to fence off the enlarged car park area at the Glebe Court end of the allotments using chicken wire and posts. Mr. Smith said that he wanted a post and rail fencing around the car park and that he had the wood required for the job.

Mrs. Dinnin to ask Mark Blacktin to requote for the labour costs only

**Action: C. Dinnin**

- **Information Boards**

Mark Blacktin has quoted for repairing the information boards at Watton Green and the Lammas.

Mr. Smith said he would like to investigate how the information boards are put together and the option of using recycled plastic before agreeing on any quotations. This was agreed.

**Action: M. Smith**

## b) Routine Reports

### i) Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests

Mr. Meischke confirmed that the above test had been completed this week.

### 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

None.

### v) Monthly village-report

Mr. Stock completed the report on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2019 and here reported on the negative items only.

- **Sportsfield:** Strimming is needed around the benches and the trim-trail equipment. Mr. Meischke to ask David Payne to do the work required. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Tennis courts:** Litter was bad at the entrance to Tennis Court A. This issue should improve when a large lidded-litterbin is fitted.
- **Allotments:** The condition of these was variable but generally good and many plots were being actively worked on during his visit. Mrs. Dinnin said that there are one or two allotment holders who are not looking after their plots. However, she had some very good new tenants.
- **Culverts in Mill Lane:** Fully exposed due to clearance work and now clear of litter. However, because of this the site is currently unattractive due to old graffiti on the brickwork being revealed.

- **Salt bins:** The Perrywood Lane bin is in a very bad state and needs replacing, as does the one at the bottom of Station Road. Ken Crofton agreed to investigate the specification for the litterbins with a view to the Parish Council agreeing their purchase. **Action: K. Crofton**
- **Dog waste bin:** The EHDC bin near the War Memorial is badly damaged and split. The Clerk to Inform EHD accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Defibrillator:** The door to the cabinet was found to be unlocked and ajar, and the green light on the defibrillator itself was not glowing. Mr. Stock informed Mr. Meischke and together they inspected the issue further and established that the Defibrillator appeared to be working in so much as it was issuing recorded instructions for use. It was agreed to contact the Defibrillator supplier to ask them for further information. It was also agreed to ask them if they now sell a solar-panel unit that could be used to power the cabinet-heater. **Action: J. Allsop**
- Mrs. McCash agreed to ask PCSO Sally Brooks as to whether or not any attempted use of the Defibrillator had been logged/reported. **Action: H. McCash**
- **Ornate village sign:** The post can be rocked a little. Mr. Smith agreed to take a look at the situation. **Action: M. Smith**
- **Station Road:** There appeared to be the possibility of some minor fly-tipping or a children's 'camp' on the roadside bank opposite to Watton Place Clinic. Because of the possible dangers involved, Mrs. Dinnin agreed to take pictures and send them to the Clerk so she can report it to the correct authority. **Action: C. Dinnin**

vi) **Weekly sportsfield**

None.

vii) **Website/Facebook**

None.

vi) **Highway and Lighting faults**

None.

ix) **Dog fouling reports**

None.

x) **Police reports**

Refer to Police report under item 2 – Public participation, directly after District Councillor Sophie Bell's report.

**9. Correspondence received**

None.

**10. Village organisations**

• **Watton-at-Stone Youth Club**

Mr. Meischke said that Lyn Oakman will no longer be attending the Youth Club sessions. However, she will continue to do the books until someone else can be found to replace her.

• **Advertising banners on the High Street railings at the roundabout with Station Road**

It was agreed to ask the school to remove their banner from the High Street railings as it has now been in place for several month's. **Action: J. Allsop**

As previously agreed, this barrier should only be used to advertise events such as the Church fete and banners should only be in place for a week or two.

**11. Items for Parish News**

No items were identified for June edition of the Parish News.

• **Apologies for absence**

Mr. Meischke gave his apologies for the May Parish Council meeting.

**The meeting closed 2100.**

**The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019.**