

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 15th October 2019

Present:	Cllr. Mike Smith (Chairman)	Cllr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman),
	Cllr. Stephen Block	Cllr. Christine Dinnin
	Cllr. Helen McCash	Cllr. Ian Knight
	Cllr. Kay Jancey	Cllr. David Stock
	Clerk: Jane Allsop	
Police:	PCSO Sally Brooks (left meeting 1928)	

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence: Cllr. Catherine Hammon and Cllr. Emma Waltham.

2. Public Participation

None.

3. Chairman's/Clerk's Report

Information board on the Lammas will be discussed under item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee.

4. Declaration of Interests

Cllr. Meischke declared an interest in item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Information board on the Lammas (his son Jonathon Meischke has been commissioned to do the artwork for this board).

• Police Report

Cllr. Smith welcomed PCSO Sally Brooks to the meeting and invited her to give her report on Policing matters.

PCSO Brooks gave Parish Councillors details of recent incidents that have occurred in the Parish of Watton-at-Stone over the last month. These included:

- theft of two bronze statues from Blue Bury farm;
- a husky dog roaming around the village on numerous occasions;
- theft from a van;
- parking complaint;
- off-road bikers driving on Mill Lane and the Lammas.

PCSO Sally Brooks left the meeting.

5. Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

• Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 17th September 2019

Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved.

b) Review of actions

1. Submit items to be included in 2020/21 budget

Refer to item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee - Reminder for Budget items for 2020/21.

2. Obtain quotation to reroof the car park low-level roof

Cllr. Smith said that he has spoken to the person who reroofed the Pavilion/meeting room sided of the building and is now awaiting a quotation to reroof the car park low-level roof.

Action: M. Smith

3. Advertise Neighbourhood Plan exhibition in Parish News when a date has been confirmed:

Outstanding.

Action: C. Hammon

c) Action points resolved

1. Install the two salt bins
2. Arrange for Jacqueline Veater and Mehron Kirk to have access rights to Parish Online
3. Ask Sophie Bell to chase various items concerning parking restrictions in the High Street
4. Agree proposed 'Gains'
5. Update gains document and after final agreement pass to Jacqueline Veater
6. Display notices of conclusion of audit on Parish Council website and notice boards
7. Obtain quotation from P. J. Roofing to replace the broken roof tiles
8. Obtain updated Active East Herts posters
9. Charge Football Club costs of repairs to the broken floodlighting battery and supply of case
10. Ask David Payne to do various jobs around the sportsfield areas
11. Obtain quotations for work to Scarlet Oak from TreeSmiths, Adam Welch and C-Trees Limited

12. Ask Tim Hill to arrange a site survey of the Lammas
13. E-mail Parish Councillors allotment water charges for 2019/20
14. Send out annual allotment invoices on 1st October
15. E-mail letters to allotment holders who have not been cultivating their plots
16. Select and purchase additional shrubs for War Memorial site
17. Purchase plastic planters to accommodate poppies
18. Investigate planter types for War Memorial site entrance
19. Ask Adam Welch to ensure that the new planting is watered: outstanding
20. **Inspect Rainbow Multi-Slide re wood on bridge and Supernova re surface lifting**
Cllr. Meischke said that there is an issue with not only the Supernova safety surface but also the adjacent piece of equipment, the junior climbing frame. Both items were supplied and fitted by Kompan. The climbing frame was initially installed too close to the football pitch and had to be repositioned closer to the hedge line. The safety surface is now sinking in the position of the original installation and needs urgent attention. **Action: J. Allsop**
21. Inspect damage to light on Community Hall
22. Inspect wonky dog-waste bins
23. Give copy of decorator's quotation to the Clerk and accept quotation
24. Remove ex hires details from the website

d) Action points outstanding for more than two months

1. **Contact groups that attend the War Memorial Hall re an entry on the website**
The Clerk said she had been unsuccessful in contacting the groups that use the War Memorial Hall. It was agreed not to pursue this further.

6. Planning

a) Applications

None

b) Decisions

None

7. Specific items

a) Report from District Councillor Sophie Bell

Cllr. Sophie Bell has not provided the Parish Council with any updates relating

Cllr. Smith said that he received the following e-mail, dated 1st October, from Andrew Pulham, Support Officer, EHDC.

'Cllr. Sophie Bell has suggested I make contact with you concerning a scrutiny review of aspects of parking policy currently underway here at East Herts Council. (Cllr. Bell is a member of the Task and Finish Group that has been set up to take evidence and present recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and I have been brought in by the Council to help plan and support this scrutiny process).

Members would like to extend an invitation to a representative from Watton at Stone to attend a Task and Finish session on the evening of 13 November, at Wallfields, to discuss apparent parking problems in Watton at Stone. The usual format for the attendance of 'witnesses' is that they deliver a short presentation followed by a Q&A session.

If you think there is merit in a representative from the Parish Council attending to participate in this session, whether this would yourself or another Parish Councillor, I would be grateful if you could let me know at your earliest convenience. I can then arrange for a formal invitation and additional details to be sent to you.

If you have any questions about this matter, please don't hesitate to contact me.'

Cllr. Smith said that he was considering putting his name forward to attend this event and asked other members of the Parish Councillors to contact him if they wish to attend. **Action: Parish Councillors**

b) Neighbourhood plan AND Gains Committee – progress report

Cllr. Smith said that he had noted, from viewing the Steering Group's drop-box, that changes had been made to the Parish Council's draft 'Gains' rather than us receiving comments/the thinking behind the need for changes. The 'Gains' Working Group will meet on Friday 18th October to discuss and review these changes.

Note: The NP Steering Group will be meeting on Monday 21st October; Cllrs. Smith, Meischke and Stock to attend.

c) Traffic in the High Street (e-mail from EHDC)

Refer to item 7 a, Specific items - Report from District Councillor Sophie Bell.

During the September 2018 Parish Council meeting, it was agreed to let everything settle down after the completion of the changes made by HCC and then continue to monitor the situation. Thus the item was removed from Parish Council agenda until March 2019. It was then further deferred until June 2019, and again until after the summer holidays were over.

It was now agreed that the problems in the High Street continued. For this reason, Cllr. Stock suggested that the time had come to again review and address the on-going issues that still exist, especially bearing in mind that the village is to be developed further with a resultant increase in traffic movements through the High Street.

He proposed that we consider appointing someone to be the lead Parish Councillor for the task, as he himself was for the Station Road project, to move it on. This to be discussed further at our meeting in November.

Agenda: 11/19

d) Report on First Aid training held on 12th October

Cllr. Jancey said the first aid course held on Saturday 12th October was a great success. The trainer was excellent and included some interesting anecdotal stories. She said it would have been and added benefit to have a working defibrillator for demonstrational purposes.

Cllr. Jancey instructed the Clerk to contact all those that attended the course to ask them for feedback. The feedback was then added to the spreadsheet put together for the event. Cllr. Jancey said she would e-mail Parish Councillors a copy of this document.

Action: K. Jancey

Cllr. Jancey said that 11 of the 12 attendees e-mailed their feedback, which was all positive except that 4 attendees commented that they were cold. Cllr. Jancey said that nobody had made her or Cllr. Block aware that they were cold and if they had done so the heating would have been turned up.

Alex Hurt, who attended the course has offered to write an article for the Parish News. The Clerk to contact Alex Hurt requesting a copy of the article before it is submitted.

Action: J. Allsop

e) Ornate Village Sign

Cllr. Smith said that during the renovation works at the War Memorial site, they had forgotten to ask Grassroots if they could make a concrete plinth around the post for the Ornate Village sign.

Cllr. Meischke said that Mark Blacktin was asked to quote for this earlier in the year and he would speak to him again about doing this work.

Action: J. Meischke

f) Update on A602 improvements from Watton-at-Stone to Tonwell

Cllr. Meischke said that he has been informed that it will not be possible for the A602 scheme to include any changes to the High Street because there is already a scheme in place. However, they might be agreeable to installing a village gateway in the vicinity of the 30mph signpost. Parish Councillors agreed that

Cllr. Meischke's should pursue the possibility of a gateway with the A602 Hertfordshire Highways team and that it should be a simple design which includes our village logo and is preferably made from plastic wood.

Action: J. Meischke

8. Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

Cllr. Block reported on the following item.

- **Monthly accounts**

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty cash - Payments	
2 Allotment rents	34.50	Diary to record defib inspections	3.48
1 x Applicant – 1 ST Aid	10.00	Self-Amalgamating tape	7.67
Donation	<u>2.75</u>	12 x 1 st class stamps	<u>8.40</u>
	47.25		19.55
Cheques issued			
Wages and Salaries	September 2019		1587.66
Bidwells	Rent for sportsfield extension		125.00
Watton Nursery	Shrubs for War Memorial site		55.00
Adam Compton	Return of Allotment rent and deposit payment		69.00
HMRC	NI for Clerk - July to September 2019		238.65
Frank Coper and Son	Grass cutting 6 September		72.00
David Payne	Strimming and mowing		75.00
Christine Dinnin	Trees and shrubs for War Memorial site		126.94
BT	phone package 2020 plus Santander fax charges		128.46
Tony Silverstri	Return of Allotment deposit		50.00
Joanne Moore	Return of Allotment deposit		<u>50.00</u>
			2577.71
Cheques received			
Sports and Social Club	Battery repair and case		10.00
Sports and Social Club	Hire of the sportsfield facilities – 2 nd quarter		386.25
28 x Allotment holders	Allotment rent		845.25
1 Applicants	First Aid course		<u>10.00</u>
			1251.50

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
Floodlighting donations from 2 nd to 25 th	135.00	Philip Smith – Travel expenses - September	40.50
Active East Herts - September	377.00	JMS Archery – Archery Tuition - September	40.00
Sophie Hussain – Main Hall - 6 weeks	67.00	Tony Silvestri – Yoga instruction - September	40.00
Karen Stuart – Pavilion hire	21.00		120.50
Tony Silvestri – 4 weeks in October	48.00		
Emily Ambrose – Main Hall & Pavilion	59.00		
Felicitas Dixon – Main Hall & Pavilion	22.00		
Felicitas Dixon – toy use donation	5.00		
	734.00		
Cheques issued			
Wages	Cleaning hall in September 2019		445.36
Mark Blacktin	repair outside toilet		33.00
			478.36
Cheques received			
Bounce	Main Hall - September		207.00
Ben Talbot - Talbott Fitness	Toilet and changing room facilities		100.00
Joanne Chapman	Main Hall & Pavilion on 20.10.19		108.00
Badminton Club	Main Hall		128.25
Louise Bater	Pavilion hire		273.60
Ian Gibbs	Meeting room		6.00
Sports and Social Club	Hire of the Community Hall facilities – 2 nd quarter		386.25
			1209.10

Parish Councillors agreed the payments.

• **6-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 6-monthly statement of accounts for the period ending the 30th September 2019.

Cllr. Block highlighted some of the 2nd quarter’s income and expenditure items for the Parish Council and the Community Hall accounts. He said that the income for the Community Hall is expected to be quite a bit lower than budgeted for this year because we have lost Bounce who hired the hall three times a week and puppy classes will end in mid-November. In addition to this, several other hirers have ceased hiring the hall since the budget was set for this year in December 2018.

Cllr. Meischke said that Bounce have left the hall because of parking issues. The Clerk said that Puppy classes, which have always been held on a Sunday, are leaving to allow her family time at the weekend, however she hoped to be back in the future and loves our hall.

• **6-monthly inspection of accounts**

Cllr. McCash carried-out the six-month inspection of the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts on 14th October and they were in good order.

A copy of Cllr. McCash’s reports is included in the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts for 2019/20.

• **Reminder for Budget items for 2020/21**

Cllr. Block reminded Parish Councillors to give the Clerk their budget items for 2020/21 as soon as possible.

Action: Parish Councillors

He said that he and the Clerk hope to put the draft budget together before the end of October and then arrange a meeting of the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee.

Community Hall Trustees

Cllr. Meischke reported on the following items.

• **Roof**

Cllr. Meischke said that the Trustees accepted a quotation of £325 plus VAT from P J Roofing to replace the broken roof tiles. This work has now been completed.

• **Deep Clean**

H. D. cleaning are in the process of carrying out a deep clean of the Community Hall.

The Pavilion skirting boards have been thoroughly cleaned and are a significant improvement, although they had been unable to remove the stains on the sealant between the skirting boards and the floor.

• **Advertising for Hall**

Cllr. Meischke said that this item will be on the agenda for the next Trustees meeting.

He said that he has been unsuccessful in contacting Victoria Nightingale, who produced the ‘Way forward presentation’ with Social Media Proposal to help improve the hirings at the Community Hall. He will try again to contact her.

Action: J. Meischke

- **Allan Rattue photograph collection**

Cllr. Meischke suggested that the corridor wall that backs onto the library should be used to showcase some of the thousands of photographs and cards that Allan Rattue has of the village. He said the Jono Meischke could reproduce copies of the photos and make a montage with explanations under many of the photographs. Cllr. Meischke said that he hoped this would cost less than £500.

Parish Councillors approved the idea and asked Cllr. Meischke to keep them informed of progress.

Action: J. Meischke

- **Decoration**

This item cannot be considered until the cleaners have completed their deep clean.

- **Outside toilets**

One of the outside toilet pans came loose from its floor fittings and Mark Blacktin was instructed to repair.

- **Mat for pavilion**

Cllr. Meischke said that a mat is needed across the double fire exit doors to prevent mud going onto the Pavilion floor when these doors are being used as an entrance to and from the sportsfield. Parish

Councillors agreed the purchase. Cllr. Meischke to source a mat.

Action: J. Meischke

Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee

Cllr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **New Football pitch**

Cllr. Knight said that at the September Parish Council meeting he reported that, following a meeting with Steve Maker from Herts Football Association, it had been hoped that a meeting would take place at the end of September with their pitch expert to get estimates for developing the Mill Lane site. This has been delayed and will probably not happen until sometime in November.

Concern was shown by Parish Councillors as to how the Football Club would manage the site when they have difficulty keeping the Parish Council owned facilities in good order.

It was agreed that members of the Gains Committee meet to draw up a procedure before meeting with the football clubs to see a way forward.

Parish Councillors agreed that they did not want to ultimately own and manage a new football site. One way forward might be to let the Youth Football have the Mill Lane site.

With reference to the recent state the Adult Men's Football Club left the Community Hall facilities and surrounding area after a recent football match, Parish Councillors expressed their severe displeasure and said that this situation cannot continue. Cllr. Knight agreed to speak to the parties involved and report back to the Parish Council.

Action: I. Knight

Environment Sub-Committee

Cllr. Dinnin reported on the following item.

- **Oak Tree on the Sportsfield**

Cllr. Dinnin said that we have only received one quotation, from Blue Trees Limited (formerly C-Trees) for works outlined by EHDC to the TPO Scarlet Oak near the tennis courts. Adam Welch has declined to quote for the work and TreeSmiths are yet to submit their quotation.

Cllr. McCash suggested contacting Juniper Tree and Ground Care Services Ltd, who have done excellent work in the Church grounds. This was agreed. The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Tim Hill MWT**

Cllr. Dinnin said that she e-mailed Tim Hill requesting that he arrange for a site survey of the Lammas (approximate cost £400). He said that the work would be done in June or July 2020 and asked for a map of the area, which she e-mailed to him but has not heard from him since. She agreed to e-mail him again.

Action: C. Dinnin

- **Grass cutting**

Jeff Skidmore Contractors have carried out the second grass cut a few days ago. Cllrs. Smith and Knight agreed that the area is looking good especially now that the trees we cut back last year have grown up a bit. It was agreed that this is the standard we should be looking to achieve each year.

- **Hedge cutting – Church Walk**

Cllr. Smith said that Jeff Skidmore Contractors have done a lovely job of hand-cut the Church Walk hedge, and not flail cut it. They have miscalculated how much work was required and time needed to do the job.

They thought the work required on the Church Walk side was up to the end of the allotments hedge on one side and the sportsfield hedge on the other side. They will need to requote for this work in 2020.

The Clerk to e-mail Jeff Skidmore Contractors accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Allotment rents and water charges**

The allotment rent renewals have gone out to all Allotment holders. The annual water charges for 2018/19 is significantly lower than in previous year and therefore the charges made to allotment holders has been reduced to the level they were at 2 years ago (£6.50 for a pull plot and £3.25 for a half plot).

Cllr. Dinnin said there are several people on the allotment waiting list and she should be able to allocate them all plots.

Action: C. Dinnin

- **War Memorial**

Cllr. Stock said that the work on the site is now complete, including the additional planting. The new planting has been kept to a minimum and will be reviewed again in the New Year.

To ensure that the site is maintained in good order, he suggested that we monitor its condition on a regular basis and kill/remove significant weed-growth as it occurs. Although happy to do this himself, Cllr. Smith agreed to treat the weed growth because he had the appropriate equipment.

Action: M. Smith

Cllr. Dinnin said that Adam Welch always ensures that the War Memorial area is weeded before Remembrance Sunday.

- **Inspection of area around the Mill Lane culverts**

Cllr. Dinnin said that she had inspected the culverts but felt nothing could be done until the Parish Council got a reply from Tim Hill's enquiry to the Environment Agency about cutting a relief channel.

- **Lammas Information board**

The Clerk said that the September minutes should have included that the Parish Council agreed to instruct Jono Meischke to do the artwork for the replacement Lammas information board.

Cllr. Meischke showed Parish Councillors the artwork that Jono Meischke had done so far on the Lammas information board. There are a few changes required including the addition of the circle of six Elm trees.

It was agreed to ask Bob Thornton to clarify the wildlife depictions on the map.

Cllr. Meischke to act accordingly.

Action: J. Meischke

b) Routine Reports

- i) **Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests**

The emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call test was carried out prior to the start of this meeting.

- ii) **Gas and electricity meter readings**

Cllr. 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**

Done.

- iv) **Monthly village-report**

Cllr. Waltham completed the report on 15th October 2019 and Cllr. Smith read out her report as follows.

- Dog waste bags dispenser empty near the school

Cllr. Smith to contact the person who keeps the dispenser filled with bags.

Action: M. Smith

- The dog waste bin on footpath 17 near Glebe Road is hanging out from its frame/casing.

Cllr. Smith said he had inspected, and no action is required.

- The War Memorial will need a weed before 11/11

Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - War Memorial.

- A branch is over the footpath that runs from Walkern Road along the river. It's not blocking the path but needs cutting off the tree as it's hanging off and will fall off eventually.

The Clerk to inform Lindsay Holt (Woodhall Estate) accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

- The dog waste bin at the end of church path seems to have tilted. It seems stable however!

No action required.

Action: J. Allsop

- v) **Weekly sportsfield**

None.

- vi) **6- month check**

Cllr. Smith and Cllr. Dinnin agreed to do the 6-month check before the November Parish Council meeting.

Action: M. Smith/C. Dinnin

- vii) **Weekly defibrillator inspection**

Nothing adverse to report.

- viii) **Website/Facebook.**

None.

ix) Highway and Lighting faults

Report overgrown footpath from BT exchange toward Stevenage roundabout, approximately 120 metres

Action: J. Allsop

x) Dog fouling reports

None.

xi) Police reports

None.

9. Correspondence received

None

10. Village organisations**• Watton Place Clinic**

Cllr. McCash reported that it is with regret that Professor David Haslam is to retire from Watton Place Clinic with effect from 22nd October 2019 due sadly, to poor health.

I am sure the Parish Council wish to join with me in thanking him for his dedication over the past years.

There will be a collection being made at the surgery and there will be a party to wish him well, in due course.

Cllr. Meischke proposed that the Parish Council offer use of the Pavilion for the party free of charge. This was agreed by all Parish Councillors.

With effect from January 2020, Dr. Eckart Loeffler will be working full time for the practice, (he has been locum at the practice during Prof. Haslam's sick leave).

The practice will also be employing a lady doctor, Dr Rupal Shah (no relation to Dr. Dilesh Shah) from the 3rd January 2020 to work every Friday.

Parish Councillors agreed to send a card to Professor Haslam thanking him for his years of service.

Action: J. Allsop

11. Items for Parish News

None.

The meeting closed 2155.

The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 12th November 2019.