

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

Present:	Cllr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman)	Cllr. Stephen Block
	Cllr. Christine Dinnin	Cllr. Kay Jancey
	Cllr. Ian Knight	Cllr. David Stock
	Clerk: Jane Allsop	
	District Cllr. Sophie Bell (from 1918)	
Police:	PC Paul Chapman (until 1932)	

In the absence of Cllr. Smith, Cllr. Meischke took the chair.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence: Cllr. Mike Smith (Chairman), Cllr. Catherine Hammon, Cllr. Helen McCash and Cllr. Emma Waltham.

2. Public Participation

None.

3. Chairman’s/Clerk’s Report

None.

4. Declaration of Interests

- Cllr. Dinnin declared a personal interest in item 6 a, planning applications – Land adjacent to BT exchange, High Street (Cllr. Dinnin lives opposite the application site).

• Police Report

Cllr. Meischke welcomed Pc Paul Chapman to the meeting.

PC Chapman said that PCSO Sally Brooks has been off work for the last 4 weeks due to a bereavement and is expected to return to work shortly.

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

- theft from a vehicle;
- theft of contents of trailer;
- bicycle stolen from young lad during the day. The police have obtained a decent photo from the doorbell camera, but the thief has not been identified;
- man, approximately 40 years old, has been banging on doors with two youths in the School Lane area.

PC Chapman said that police have been present in the Great Innings and Clappers Lane area and moved a couple of groups of youths on who were congregating in the Great Innings area. He said that the police, who were in pursuit of a stolen vehicle up by the church, found stolen tools in that vehicle.

Cllr. Meischke said that he visits Scotland on a regular basis, and they use cardboard cut-out policeman with speed-guns which appears to work well in reducing drivers’ speeds

District Cllr. Bell said that in some villages in the UK they get children to design signs for the entrance of the village asking drivers to slow down and this has worked quite well in reducing speeds.

PC Chapman agreed to find out if it is lawful to have to cardboard cut-out policeman with speed-guns at the side of the road.

Action: PC Chapman

PC Chapman said that he has been covering his own area as well as that of PC Nic Musto, since he went on sick leave last year. A new female Police Constable will be in place in January 2020 to take over PC Musto’s position.

PC Chapman left the meeting.

5. Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 15th October 2019**

Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved.

b) Review of actions**1. Contact Kompan about safety surface under junior climbing frame**

The Clerk e-mailed Kompan and received the following reply on 13th November.

‘All elements are outside of any warranty cover on product and installation.

Therefore, we can inspect the site in order to investigate and then provide a quotation for necessary remedial works.

If you can send me the full play area address, we can arrange a site visit?’

It was agreed that the Clerk contact them again and arrange a site visit.

Action: J. Allsop

2. Contact Cllr. Smith if you can attend parking policy meeting on 13th November

Cllr. Meischke said that unfortunately none of the Parish Council are available to attend this meeting.

District Cllr. Sophie Bell said that she was on the Committee that is looking at the East Herts parking policies and could raise any issues the Parish Council has concerning parking issues in the village at this meeting.

3. Speak to Mark Blacktin about concrete around the post for the Ornate Village sign

Cllr. Meischke said that Mark Blacktin has been asked to do the work.

4. Pursue the possibility of a gateway with the A602 Hertfordshire Highways team

Cllr. Meischke said that he had written in response to the A602 consultation pursuing the possibility of a gateway for the village. The Clerk to chase.

Action: J. Allsop

5. Pursue idea of montage of Allan Rattue’s photographs

Cllr. Meischke said that Allen Rattue has approximately 75 of his photos and cards digitally scanned and he would probably be adding to this collection. Cllr. Meischke said he had spoken to Jono Meischke about putting together the montage of photos and cards. He said that there is no rush for the montage to be put together and this item should now be placed on the monthly agenda under specific items.

Agenda: 12.19

c) Action points resolved

1. E-mail Parish Councillors a copy of the 1st-Aid attendee and feedback spreadsheet

2. Contact Alex Hurt re 1st aid article for Parish News

3. Give the Clerk budget items for 2020/21 as soon as possible

4. Contact Victoria Nightingale re her ‘Way forward presentation’

5. Source a mat for the Pavilion

6. Speak to the Football Club re condition of the Community Hall facilities and surrounding facilities

Cllr. Meischke said that the adult men’s football did leave the Community Hall in a better condition when they last used it. However, they hosed out the changing room and corridor areas and left the water standing and it was fortunate that there were no casual hirers that weekend.

7. Ask Juniper Tree and Ground Care Services Ltd to quote for work to Oak tree

8. **Contact Tim Hill (MWT)** – refer to 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee

9. Contact Jeff Skidmore Contractors re hedge and grass cutting quote for 2020

10. Contact people on the Allotment waiting list

11. Treat weed growth around the War Memorial

12. Ask Bob Thornton to clarify the wildlife depictions on the Lammas information board map

13. Contact the person who keeps the dispenser filled with dog-waste bags

14. E-mail Lindsay Holt (Woodhall Estate) re branch overhanging footpath along the river

The branch has not been removed. The Clerk to contact Nick Fox (Head of Wildlife, Environment and Forestry at Woodhall Estate).

Action: J. Allsop

15. Do the 6-month check before the November Parish Council meeting.

16. Report overgrown footpath from BT exchange toward Stevenage roundabout

17. Send a card to Professor Haslam thanking him for his years of service

The Clerk was asked to seek confirmation from Watton Place Clinic that Professor Haslam has retired.

Action: J. Allsop

d) Action points outstanding for more than two months**1. Obtain quotation to reroof the car park low-level roof**

Cllr. Smith has obtained a quotation from P. J. Andrews, which has been e-mailed to all Community Hall Trustees.

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

Cllr. Meischke said that the NP exhibition looks like it will now take place in January 2020.

6. Planning

In the absence of Cllr. McCash, Cllr. Meischke reported on the following planning applications.

All applications are dealt with in line with the Parish Council's planning protocol.

a) Applications

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

- **Land adjacent to BT exchange, High Street (3/19/2222/FUL)**

Erection of 1, 3 bedroomed dwelling with garage and parking

Cllr. Meischke said that before the Parish Council decides how to respond to EHDC they should obtain the views of the residents affected by this application.

It was agreed that Cllr. Block should contact those affected in the High Street and the Clerk to e-mail those affected in Beane Road, asking them to forward their comments to the Parish Council.

Action: S. Block/J. Allsop

b) Decisions

None.

7. Specific items

a) Report from District Councillor Sophie Bell

District Cllr. Sophie Bell reported on the following items.

- **Parking Policy meeting**

District Cllr. Bell would be attending the parking policy meeting tomorrow (13th November) as she is now part of that committee. She said about one third of all the e-mails she receives from villagers is about parking problems.

The committee decided that Watton-at-Stone and Stansted Abbots have similar parking issues and a policy should be drawn up to address both these parishes. She asked Parish Councillors to forward her any issues she was not already aware of, before the meeting tomorrow night.

She said that EHDC are in the process of looking at the wider problem to see if they can alleviate parking issues. They want to see more cycle storage available and alternatives for people to get to and from the villages rather than having to drive.

Residents parking won't work in Watton-at-Stone because some of the policies that work in the town would not work in our village. Almost everywhere in Watton-at-Stone is within 10 minutes and Stansted Abbots are the same.

- **Mill Lane bridge**

The other issue District Cllr. Bell raised was the damage to the Mill Lane bridge. She did report this and was informed that it had been made safe. However, on inspection she found this was not the case and would be contacting Highways to make sure that at a minimum the wall is braced. Her concern was that this road is heavily used by pedestrians, many of them children, going to and from the Scout Hut as well as the surrounding fields.

- **Drain cover opposite Watton Place Clinic**

The drain cover outside Watton Place Clinic has broken again, within days of being repaired.

District Cllr. Bell said she had reported this breakage.

b) Neighbourhood plan and Gains Committee – progress report

Cllr. Waltham's e-mailed Neighbourhood Plan report read as follows.

'We have pencilled in 18 Jan for the exhibition. The Community Hall isn't available so we will find another venue, potentially the School.

We have now finished our assessment of sites regarding 'green spaces' which would give additional protection to green sites regarding them becoming future development (for housing). The assessment is in the Drop Box if PCs would like to review.

Clive and I met with Woodhall recently to talk to them about the green spaces work and they will come back to us on that if they have any comments. We will also have to consult with the diocese and the Ryan family, as they own other sites in the village that the NP group would want to become 'green spaces'. We will undertake that before Christmas.

The NP group is meeting again on 18 November. We will decide then if the exhibition date is viable. We are just really waiting on the policies now, which Jacqueline is drafting, to be able to commit.'

Cllr. Stock said that the meeting with members of the NP Steering Group on 21st October, which he attended together with Cllr. Smith and Cllr. Meischke, proved to be very worthwhile and some misunderstandings on both sides were highlighted and resolved. A member of the Parish Council is welcome to attend future meetings of the Steering Group.

District Cllr. Bell said that she had now been promised the Archaeology report, which will be included in the Neighbourhood Plan.

c) Traffic in the High Street

Following on from our meeting in October, Cllr. Stock said that, ideally, it would be sensible to appoint someone from the High Street area as the Lead Parish Councillor on this issue.

Cllr. Jancey said that she would be willing to take on this responsibility and was duly appointed as the Lead Parish Councillor. Due to his experiences as the Lead on the Station Road project, Cllr. Stock is happy to assist Cllr. Jancey as the need arises. He also suggested that the Parish Council has an ad hoc meeting to discuss the High Street issues and our aims before any contact is made with HCC and our County Councillor.

Action: K. Jancey

The Clerk to 'dig out' as much past-information as she can regarding the High Street traffic issues and pass it to Cllr. Jancey and Cllr. Stock.

Action: J. Allsop

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	
3 Allotment rents, 1 x £100	169.00	Asda – tea, coffee etc	7.94
	169.00	B&Q 2 troughs for remembrance poppies	19.00
			26.94
Cheques issued			
Perfect Ground Solutions	Work to Cricket pitch (refer to Cricket Club donation under income)		1,095.00
Community Hall	1/2-year grant		2,687.50
Govresources	Neighbourhood Plan - consultation work		2,400.00
Rebecca Neal	return of Allotment deposit		50.00
David Payne	Strimming and mowing		75.00
Jeff Skidmore	Lammas & Watton green grass cuts, hedge cut sportsfield/church W		1,230.00
British Legion	Poppy donation		80.00
Wages and salaries	32 hours litterpick at £8.88		<u>1303.50</u>
			8,921.00
Cheques received			
Cricket Club	Donations for work done to Cricket pitch		930.00
14 x Allotment holders	Allotment rent		545.00
Sports and Social Club	Pitch markings		<u>105.00</u>
			1580.00

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
Floodlighting donations from 25/09 to	83.00	Philip Smith – Travel expenses - September	54.00
Active East Herts - October	488.00	Tony Silvestri – Yoga instruction - September	90.00
Sophie Hussain – Main Hall - 4 weeks	40.00	Flooring UK – carpet mat for pavilion	<u>48.00</u>
Tony Silverstri – 4 weeks in October	48.00		192.00
Nikki Coulson	45.00		
Felicitas Dixon – Main Hall & Pavilion	22.00		
Felicitas Dixon – toy use donation	5.00		
Emma Hanlon	<u>45.00</u>		
	776.00		
Cheques issued			
D. P. Electrics	To replace broken outside light		75.00
P. J. Roofing Contractors	Repairs to roof		390.00
Wages	Cleaning hall in October 2019		<u>395.36</u>
			860.36
Cheques received			
Loren Goldsworthy	Pavilion hire		
Samantha Forde	Main Hall and Pavilion hire		102.60
Stuart Blackburne	Main Hall - December		58.50
Parish Council	½ year grant		60.00
Ben Talbot - Talbott Fitness	Toilet and changing room facilities		2,687.50
			<u>80.00</u>
			2,988.60

Parish Councillors agreed the payments.

- **Budget and Finance Sub-Committee meeting date to discuss 2020/2021 budgets**

The Budget and Finance Sub-Committee will be meeting on 26th November at 19:15 in the Community Hall to discuss the 2020/2021 budgets. All Parish Councillors are welcome to attend this meeting.

Community Hall Trustees

Cllr. Meischke reported on the following items.

- **Roof**

Cllr. Meischke said that Cllr. Smith had obtained a quotation to reroof the low-level roof on the car park side of the Community Hall by the same contractors who did the other low-level roof. This estimate to be discussed at the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee meeting on 26th November.

- **Deep Clean**

H. D. Cleaning are still in the process of carrying out the deep clean of the Community Hall.

- **Advertising for Hall**

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

- **Decoration**

Cllr. Meischke said that a decision on what decoration work is required cannot be made until the deep clean is completed. This item to be on the agenda for the next Trustees meeting. **Agenda: Trustees**

- **Outside toilets**

Mark Blacktin has been asked to carryout repair work to the outside toilets following vandalism that occurred after football had finished on 2nd November.

At first, Cllr. Meischke thought it was only the toilet-roll holder, soap dispenser that had been vandalised, with paper everywhere. However, he then found that someone must have been locked inside the toilet because the door has been kicked in breaking/splitting the wooden frame by the catch for the lock.

The Clerk to order a replacement toilet-roll holder and soap dispenser to replace items already in stock items. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Egress light on the Tennis Courts**

The egress light on the new court blew and D. P. Electrics have replaced the bulb but cannot get it to work properly with the coin meter, which they say is damaged. Cllr. Meischke said that he is in the process of sourcing a replacement coin meter but having difficulty finding one that would fit. The double courts have a LED egress light. Parish Councillors agreed that the single court should also be fitted with a LED egress light. Cllr. Meischke to ask D. P. Electrics to fit one. **Action: J. Meischke**

- **Roof Gutters**

The roof gutters were overflowing during recent heavy rain. Cllr. Meischke to instruct Mark Blacktin to clear and clean the gutters and elbows. **Action: J. Meischke**

- **Hirer agreement**

A recent casual hirer, who was reminded that there are no facilities for the disposal of rubbish at the hall, left a large bag of rubbish by the car park bin instead. Rosemary Brown had to get her wheelbarrow to carry the rubbish home and put in the Parish Council litterbins.

It was agreed that the wording for the hire agreement needs to be altered so that the removal of rubbish includes the areas around the hall as well as inside it. This item to be on the agenda for the next Trustees meeting. **Agenda: Trustees**

Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee

Cllr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **New Football pitch**

Cllr. Knight said that members of the Neighbourhood Plan Gains Committee met with both the Adult Men's Football and Ladies Football Club representatives. The prospect of football pitches at the Mill Lane site was met with general enthusiasm for the new facilities. The Youth football Club were not able to attend due to an emergency commitment.

It is planned the Football Clubs will meet again with the Gains Committee and Steering Group members in early January. In the meantime, they will arrange to meet with Derek Hill (Youth Football Club).

The meeting with the Football Association's independent site/soil specialist (Mr. Jeggo) is expected to take place sometime this month. This will confirm if the area is suitable for football pitches and to enable estimates to be obtained for developing the Mill Lane site.

- **Leaves on tennis court**

Cllr. Knight said that there is the usual problem of leaves on the tennis courts. These are largely been cleared by the Tennis Club who have a leaf blower, but David Payne could be instructed to clear the leaves if necessary.

The Clerk said that Rosemary Brown had made her aware that David Payne was moving out of the village. She broached the topic with David, who has now provided her with his new address which is between

Peterborough and St. Neots. She told Parish Councillors that he will continue to do the work required by the Parish Council and hopes in the future to employ someone in the village to do this work on his behalf. Cllr. Meischke said that it would be best for the Parish Council to find someone more local to do the work. This was agreed by Parish Councillors present at the meeting.

Cllr. Dinnin and Cllr. Meischke to look at the current duties carried-out by David Payne and update these as required. They will then seek quotations for the work required. They will consider if it is appropriate to ask Frank Cooper and Son Limited to quote for the strimming work around the sportsfield.

This item to be discussed further at the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee meeting on Tuesday 26th November.

Action: B&F

- **Changing rooms**

Refer to item 5 c Action points resolved -Speak to the Football Club re condition of the Community Hall facilities and surrounding facilities.

Environment Sub-Committee

Cllr. Dinnin reported on the following item.

- **Oak Tree on the Sportsfield**

Cllr. Dinnin said that the following quotations have been received for work to the TPO Scarlet Oak near the tennis courts.

- Juniper Tree £1200
- Tree Smiths £800 – wants a fast response for this price
- Blue Tree - £850

These prices were e-mailed to all Parish Councillors who agreed to accept Tree Smiths' quotation.

The Clerk to chase Tree Smiths' to find out when the work will be done.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Tim Hill MWT**

Cllr. Dinnin said that she e-mailed Tim in October and received the following reply on 7th November.

‘The £400 fee I mentioned on site was an estimate which was subject to seeing the boundary (from the map I requested) and speaking to the surveyor who would do the survey. The quotation I sent was to do both the survey and write the management plan. If you would like me to give you a firm quotation for purely the ecological survey I am happy to do so.’

Cllr. Dinnin said that she then requested a firm quotation for the ecological survey and would copy this to Parish Councillors as soon as it is received.

Action: C. Dinnin

- **Allotment**

Cllr. Dinnin said she had let four allotment plots to new tenants. There are now two empty plots and one person on the waiting list.

- **Lammas Information board**

Cllr. Dinnin said that the map for the Lammas information board has been given to Bob Thornton who has agreed to speak to Tim Hill to clarify the wildlife depictions to be included on the map.

The replacement byelaw sign (made in March 2019) will be fitted below the Lammas information board.

Cllr. Dinnin said that vandals had recently destroyed the existing byelaw sign.

- **Hedge cutting on Church Walk and School Lane**

As reported at the October Parish Council meeting, due to a misunderstanding, Jeff Skidmore Contractors thought the hedge work required only cutting the Church Walk side of the hedge up to the end of the allotments on one side and the sportsfield hedge on the other side and therefore have charged an extra £100 (plus VAT) for the additional work.

Cllr. Dinnin said that Jeff Skidmore Contractors have submitted their quotation for grass cutting and hedge cutting in 2020 and this would be discussed at the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee meeting on 26th November.

- **Church Walk grass verge**

The Church Walk grass verge has become very overgrown, narrowing the footpath. The Clerk to find out when the grass verge was last cut back, who did the work and how much they charged. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Station Road footpath at the entrance of Watton Place Clinic**

There are overhanging branches on the footpath from the corner of the High Street and Station Road up to the entrance of the car park at the Doctors' surgery (Watton Place Clinic). Cllr. Dinnin agreed to speak to the Practise Manager at Watton Place Clinic, asking her to resolve this problem.

Action: C. Dinnin

b) Routine Reports

i) Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests

The emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call test will be carried out soon.

Action: J. Meischke

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

- **Wooden fence** needs repairing. The missing fence rails were found at the back of the sportsfield.
Cllr. Smith to arrange to have the fence repaired in the Spring. **Action: M. Smith/Agenda: 04/2020**
- **Large swings** - safety surface worn. The Parish Council is aware.
- **Junior climbing frame** – wooden tread needs mending or replacing. Cllr. Meischke said that he had asked Mark Blacktin to do this work and would now chase him to do this as soon as possible.
Action: J. Meischke
- **Mill Lane Dog bin** – post is loose. Cllr. Meischke to ask Mark Blacktin to reset the dog bin.
Action: J. Meischke
- **Ornate Village sign** – still needs concrete for the base, otherwise OK. Cllr. Meischke said Mark Blacktin has been asked to do the work.
Action: J. Meischke

v) Weekly sportsfield

None.

vi) 6- month check

Cllr. Dinnin completed the 6-month check with Cllr. Smith on 11th November 2019 and reported on the negative items.

- **Bench seats**
 - **Walkern Road** – pallet has been dumped behind the seat.
Cllr. Smith to arrange for its removal. **Action: M. Smith**
 - **6 benches need painting**
 - High Street North near Bus stop
 - High Street near Mill Lane
 - Station Road opposite junction with Rectory Lane
 - Harry’s bench and 2 at top of meadow
- Cllr. Dinnin to ask Mark Blacktin to quote for doing the work in Spring. **Action: C. Dinnin**
- **Community Hall**
 - **Pavilion blinds** – door blind needs chain. Cllr. Meischke to source. **Action: J. Meischke**
 - **Tennis Courts**
 - **Hard surface** – seasonal leaves
 - **Floodlights** – egress light – offending tree due to be reduced
 - **Wire fence** – bulges where rail hit
 - **Play area**
 - **Junior climbing frame** – refer to monthly village-report

vii) Weekly defibrillator inspection

Nothing adverse to report.

viii) Website/Facebook.

None.

ix) Highway and Lighting faults

District Cllr. Bell said that within days of the manhole outside the Doctors surgery being repaired it had become unsafe again and she had therefore reported the fault to Highways.

x) **Dog fouling reports**

Cllr. Knight said that he had noticed an increase in dog fouling in the Mill Lane area.

Also, many of the dog fouling notices have gone missing from lampposts around the village.

District Cllr. Bell agreed to obtain copies from EHDC for the Parish Council to put up around the village.

Action: S. Bell

Cllr. Meischke suggested that the Parish Council now distribute the double-sided dog fouling notices that former District Councillor Michael Freeman obtained from EHDC via the Parish News. This was agreed by Parish Councillors.

xi) **Police reports**

Refer to Police report directly after item 4 – Declaration of Interests.

9. Correspondence received

Cllr. Stock said that Debra Freeman had found a lot of old Horticultural Society documentation among her husband's files. She thought that some of the documents may be in Sir Nigel Gresley's hand writing. It was agreed that after some clearing out of insignificant material Cllr. Stock should collect the documentation for safe-keeping by the Parish Council.

Action: D. Stock

District Councillor Bell suggested that the Horticultural Society minutes could be stored in the Hertfordshire County Archives. She said that she has a strong connection with that area and would be happy to take them in to be archived.

10. Village organisations

- **War Memorial Hall Management Committee**

Cllr. Stock will attend the AGM of the War Memorial Management Committee (and the subsequent routine committee meeting) to be held tomorrow.

- **River Beane Restoration Association**

Cllr. Block said that he had a DVD of the House of Commons MP debate on Chalk Streams available for Parish Councillors to watch.

- **Scout and Guide Group**

Cllr. Dinnin said that due to bad weather the annual Scouts and Guide Fireworks display was postponed from Saturday 2nd and held on Sunday 3rd November.

Cllr. Dinnin said that she had spoken to Richard Wing about progress for the new Scout Hut and the building plans are going well.

11. Items for Parish News

Cllr. Knight to arrange for dog fouling fliers to be included in the next issue of the Parish News.

Action: I. Knight

The meeting closed 2050.

The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 10th December 2019.