

## Minutes of the Zoom Parish Council meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Due to Covid 19 restrictions this Parish Council meeting is being held via Zoom.

<b>Present:</b>	Cllr. Michael Smith (Chairman)	Cllr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman)
	Cllr. Stephen Block	Cllr. Christine Dinnin
	Cllr. Catherine Hammon	Cllr. Kay Jancey
	Cllr. Ian Knight	Cllr. Helen McCash
	Cllr. David Stock	Cllr. Emma Waltham
	Clerk: Jane Allsop	

### 1. Apologies for absence

None.

### 2. Public participation

None.

### 3. Chairman's/ Clerk's report

None.

### 4. Declaration of interests

Cllr. McCash (as a partner at McCash and Hay and Stuart McCash's mother) declared a pecuniary interest in the following items.

- 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee items -
  - Internal Audit of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020
  - Annual Return of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020
  - Audit of the Community Hall accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020

### 5. Minutes of the last meeting

#### a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2020**  
Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved.
- **Report and updates on items due to be discussed at meeting cancelled on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020**  
Parish Councillors agreed that the report be approved.

#### b) Review of actions

1. **Chase EHDC re ownership of Mill Lane dog bin & request for larger bin**  
The Clerk said she had not made any progress on this item. **Action: J. Allsop**
2. **Investigate lock on Great Innings notice board:** outstanding. **Action: J. Meischke/J. Allsop**
3. **Arrange Trustees meeting:** Item on hold for the time being. **Action: J. Meischke**
4. **Meet with Richard Wing (Scouts) about facilities re land at Mill Lane:** Item on hold for the time being. **Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke**
5. **Chase Sophie Bell re monitoring figures and enforcing of parking restrictions in the High Street**  
Refer to item 7b, Specific items - Traffic in the High Street.
6. **Minute book binding**  
The Clerk to arrange for the minute books to be bound as soon as restrictions re Covid-19 are lifted. **Action: J. Allsop**
7. **Action required re website conforming to new legislation**  
Refer to item 7b, Specific items – Action required re website conforming to new legislation.
8. **Obtain insurance certificate from cleaners:** outstanding. **Action: J. Meischke**
9. **Upload War Memorial Management Plan to the website:** completed.
10. **Inspect weeds growing on tennis courts and ask David Payne to weed kill**  
Cllr. Meischke said he had instructed David Payne to do the work.
11. **Inspect path up to the tennis courts re uneven paving slabs**  
Cllr. Hammon, who originally reported this item felt they were a trip hazard. Cllr. Meischke said that there has to be more than ½ inch unevenness, which currently there is not.  
It was agreed to monitor the situation. **Action: J. Meischke/I. Knight**
12. **Inspect Station Road site to see if EHDC have cleared away fallen branches**  
Cllr. Hammon said that she could see no evidence of the fallen branches on Station Road when she compared them to photographs taken in April 2020.

## 6. Planning

The following planning applications were dealt with via e-mail and letters put through the doors of residents as and when required.

- i) Gregorys Farm, Dane End SG12 0PH (3/20/0870/LBC) – Listed Building Consent**  
Erection of single storey glass extension to timber barn together with elevational alterations including altering the position of roof lights, insertion of additional roof windows, insertion of glazed panels in south west elevation and glazing of northwest elevation. Elevational alterations to outbuilding. Erection of boundary wall with integral gate  
Parish Councillors agreed a no comment response. **Action: J. Allsop**
- ii) Gregorys Farm, Dane End SG12 0PH (3/20/0869/FUL)**  
Erection of single storey glass extension to timber barn together with elevational alterations including the insertion of conservation roof windows. Elevational alterations to outbuilding. Erection of boundary wall with integral gate  
Parish Councillors agreed a no comment response. **Action: J. Allsop**
- iii) Lamsden House Blue Hill Farm High Elms Lane (3/20/0864/HH)**  
Construction of a lean-to-glasshouse, attached to barn in the driveway  
Parish Councillors agreed a no comment response. **Action: J. Allsop**
- iv) 15 Rivershill (3/20/0964/HH)**  
Ground floor side extension to include conversion of garage and two storey rear extension to provide annex  
Parish Councillors agreed a no comment response but requested that planning officers take into consideration any comments/objections received from neighbours. **Action: J. Allsop**
- v) 31 Moorymead Close (3/20/1017/HH)**  
conversion and alteration of garage and insertion of front roof light  
Parish Councillors agreed a no comment response. **Action: J. Allsop**
- vi) Barn 4 Gregorys Farm Dane End (3/20/1038/NMA)**  
A non-material amendment of approved plans for planning application allowed on appeal with conditions; (change of use and alteration of Barn 4 to create 2 holiday lets). Alteration to internal layout and to windows and doors.  
Parish Councillors agreed a no comment response. **Action: J. Allsop**

## 7. Reports

- a) Neighbourhood plan and Gains Committee – progress reports**  
Cllr. Waltham and Cllr. Hammon provided the following report which was e-mailed to all Parish Councillors on 15<sup>th</sup> June.  
“The Neighbourhood Plan group has met twice since lockdown via Zoom. We have put together a budget for finishing the plan, which totals £7500 (approximately). The grant available to us in £6,500, so Cllr. Waltham would like approval for the Parish Council to cover a potential shortfall of £1,000 from Parish Council funds. This is likely to be needed in the 2021/22 fiscal year. Cllr. Waltham can then submit a grant application.  
There have been some problems with the website, which meant it wasn't live for periods of time, but this is now resolved.  
The team is working on preparing the materials for the Regulation 14 consultation. It has also contacted the Woodhall Estate to respond to their comments on the green spaces review.  
We hope to hold the Regulation 14 consultation this summer, though is dependent on Woodhall undertaking a site assessment of the land they propose to provide for football pitches, so that the community can have confidence that this is a viable option and that the pitches will come to fruition once the plan is adopted.”  
All Parish Council agreed to cover the potential funding shortfall of approximately £1000 which will probably be required in the year 2021/2022.
- b) Traffic in the High Street**  
Cllr. Jancey provided the following report which was e-mailed to all Parish Councillors on 15<sup>th</sup> June.  
“Sophie and I have discussed monitoring figures and enforcing of parking restrictions in the High Street.  
We do not think it is currently worth doing any surveys or audits until everything is back to normal, as any results would not be a true reflection of activity.  
As and when we are back to normal, we would also have to take into account the impact of A602 upgrade work road closures on the survey data.”  
All Parish Councillors were happy with the report.

**c) Footpaths**

Cllr. Stock provided the following report which was e-mailed to all Parish Councillors on 15<sup>th</sup> June.

“Cllr. Stock reported that, as in the past, the footpaths are to be Micro Surfaced (i.e. a covering of a black slurry material spread across the existing surfaces) starting this week and ending 26 June. Items of preparatory work have already taken place and some surface repairs are outstanding. Further to our discussions and meetings with him, this work was recommended by County Cllr. Crofton as a priority item.

As to be expected, there are budgetary issues involved. However, there is a feeling of disappointment locally that the footpaths are not being raised to a higher standard as has been the case recently with the far lesser-used footpaths on the side of the road from Watton-at-Stone towards Stevenage and that to Stapleford. While accepting that it is the best we can now hope for, Cllr. Stock remains concerned that this is yet another session of surface dressing that as such does not resolve issues concerning uneven surfaces and ponding.”

All Parish Councillors were happy with the report.

**d) Civic meeting dates for year 2020/2021**

It was agreed that Parish Council meetings shall continue to be held on the third Tuesday in the month, except for October, November, and December 2020, which will be on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday.

• 21 <sup>st</sup> July 2020	• 8 <sup>th</sup> December 2020
• No meeting in August 2020	• 19 <sup>th</sup> January 2021
• 15 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	• 16 <sup>th</sup> February 2021
• 13 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	• 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
• 10 <sup>th</sup> November 2020	• 20 <sup>th</sup> April 2021

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the Parish Council was not required to hold an Annual Parish Meeting or the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May 2020.

**e) Action required re website conforming to new legislation**

Cllr. Smith said that new government legislation comes into force in September 2020 requires all websites to be accessible to both able and disabled people. The main target groups of keyboard accessibility are

- Users with motor disabilities who have difficulty using a mouse, using a touch device, or clicking on small things.
- Blind or visually impaired users frequently prefer to navigate websites with specific Braille keyboards.
- Amputees or those with congenital amputation (birth without a limb or limbs, specifically hands in this case) often use special hardware mimicking keyboard functionality.
- Anyone who simply doesn't have access to a functioning mouse or touchpad.

He said that he had spent some considerable time investigating our website problems, which appear to be mainly pdf files and the inability to tab.

Pdf files and links to pdf's are extremely difficult for people who are not fully able to read and do not have software that is able to read the written word.

Our current website requires the use of a mouse or a touch screen device to allow access to different pages and you cannot tab direct from a keyboard.

Cllr. Smith said that Cllr. Stock has been speaking to Beanebytes about the issues.

Cllr. Stock said that first we need to establish what the issues are with the website and try and quantify the issues against the costs. Then the Parish Council need to be informed and agree to take this forward. If its quite a sizable amount of money it would be sensible to obtain alternative quotations once we know the task involved.

Cllrs. Stock and Smith agreed to move this forward with Beanebytes and report back to the Parish Council.

**Action: M. Smith/D. Stock**

**f) VE Stones**

There was no consensus as to how to deal with the painted stones, which delighted us all throughout lockdown. Probably their preservation would be problematic in an outdoor scenario and an indoor scenario was not obvious. As a compromise it was suggested that the stones be brought to the War Memorial for Remembrance Sunday and looked after in the interim by the artists.

Cllr. Meischke got in touch with the person whose idea it was to preserve the stones and she was asked to find someone in the group to drive it forward and put a proposition together for the Parish Council to discuss. Cllr. Meischke said it had been two to three weeks since he last spoke her but all the VE stones have been collected from around the Pump.

Parish Councillors agreed that the idea of people taking the stones home and bringing them back each year was a good one and would hopefully keep the children interested in the years to follow, rather than being a one off thing that they will forget about.

**g) Lammas information board and installation of byelaw sign**

Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Lammas.

**h) Land adjacent to Beane Cottage and renewal of agreement**

Parish Councillors agree the license should be renewed and consider the sale of the land at a future face to face meeting of the parish council.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**i) Ferreting licenses**

Bob Adams was issued with the following ferreting licenses in 2019 and these will expire on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

- the Lammas
- the paddock at the far end of the Lammas
- Allotment
- Watton Green
- Cottage site at Watton Green

It was agreed to renew the above licenses.

**Action: M. Smith/J. Allsop**

**j) License across Cottage Site**

Parish Councillors agreed to renew the licence for Temporary Access across the Land known as the "Old Cottage Site", at Watton Green, issued to Mr. Denis E. Filer (of Brambles, Watton Green).

**Action: M. Smith/J. Allsop**

**k) Awarding of Parish Council trophies**

The Parish Council Trophies are always awarded at the annual Community Service on the first Sunday in July. However, due to the current Covid-19 restrictions this will not take place.

The Watton-at-Stone Parish Council's Good Citizenship Award is presented to a Year 6 child (aged 11 years) who, in the opinion of the staff, has been the best citizen during their whole time at the School. As year 6 students are currently in school and will be moving up to their senior schools in September, it would be appropriate to arrange for this trophy to be awarded at Watton-at-Stone school, before the end of term.

Watton-at-Stone school has provided the Parish Council with the name of the child who would receive the award this year. Parish Councillors agreed that the trophy to be engraved accordingly and to purchase a keepsake trophy.

**Action: J. Allsop**

The Watton-at-Stone Parish Council's Outstanding Effort Award trophy, which is awarded to a Scout and Guide Beaver or Rainbow (ages 5 to 8 years), cannot be awarded until restrictions allow the Scout and Guide groups to meet again.

**8. Reports**

**a) Sub-Committees**

**Budget & Finance**

Cllr. Block reported on the following items.

- **Monthly accounts – March 2020, April 2020, May 2020, and to 16<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

**Watton-at-Stone Parish Council – March 2020**

<b>Petty Cash – Receipts</b>		<b>Petty cash - Payments</b>	
Kevin Storey -	67.50		
	<b>67.25</b>	Kevin Storey -allotment	
<b>Payments</b>			
Wages and salaries	February 2020		1303.50
David Payne	Strimming and mowing		22.50
Adam Welch	Leaf clearance		210.00
Grassroots	Work at War Memorial		223.44
			<b>1759.44</b>
<b>Receipts</b>			
None			

**Watton-at-Stone Community Hall - March 2020**

<b>Petty Cash – Receipts</b>		<b>Petty Cash -Payments</b>	
Niall Turner – 3 weeks - Main Hall	35.00	Flintloft Ironmongers - broom	16.85
Floodlighting donations to 28.01.20	197.00	Archery Company – equipment	44.70
Tony Silverstri – Pavilion hire	60.00	Philip Smith -travel expenses -table tennis	40.50
Sophie Hussain	40.00	Tony Silvestri – Yoga instruction	<b>50.00</b>
Sarah Endersbee – Main Hall &	45.00		<b>152.05</b>
Felicitas Dixon– Main Hall &	22.00		
Donation for toy use	5.00		
Cub Scouts	20.00		
Active East Herts	<u>600.00</u>		
	<b>1024.00</b>		

<b>Payments</b>		
Castle Water	Wastewater	20.75
B& Q	Paint and Materials	282.78
Wages	February 2020	395.36
E-on	Gas	321.16
Pozitive Energy	Electricity	122.94
HCC	Graffiti remover	7.80
HMRC	VAT return – January 2020	100.55
Mark Blacktin	Decoration work	2,200.00
Sports Courts UK Limited	Tennis court - Moss kill	462.00
		<b>3,913.34</b>
<b>Receipts</b>		
Hannah Copley	Main Hall and Pavilion	63.00
Ben Talbot - Talbott Fitness	Toilet and changing room facilities	80.00
Sports and Social Club	QTR 4	386.25
EDHC	Pavilion hire for general election	153.60
Ildiko	Meeting room	120.00
Weight Watchers	Pavilion hire	140.00
Peter Khera (Shotokan Karate)	Main Hall	193.80
Paula Sutton	Main Hall	222.30
Watton House	Meeting room	10.00
Ben Talbot - Talbott Fitness	Toilet and changing room facilities	90.00
Abigail Frances Williams (Moo	Pavilion hire	80.00
		<b>1538.95</b>

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council – April 2020

<b>Petty Cash – Receipts</b>		<b>Petty cash - Payments</b>	
None		BT – phone line including calls -28.01.20	27.63
		BT – phone line including calls - 28.02.20	26.46
		BT – phone line including calls - 28.03.20	26.90
			<b>80.99</b>
<b>Payments</b>			
Govresources	Neighbourhood Plan - consultation work		2,400.00
Wages and Salaries	April 2020		1303.50
HMRC	National insurance - January to March 2020		238.65
Bidwells	Rent for sportsfield extension		125.00
Frank Cooper & Son	Line Marking		126.00
David Payne	work at sportsfield		22.50
Frank Cooper & Son	Sportsfield grass cut		72.00
			<b>4,287.65</b>
<b>Receipts</b>			
HMRC	VAT rebate 03.2019-02.2020		5,518.01
SSC	Line marking donation		105.00
Philip Fifield	Allotment deposit		50.00
			<b>5,673.01</b>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall – April 2020

<b>Petty Cash – Receipts</b>		<b>Petty Cash -Payments</b>	
Floodlighting donations to 30.03.20	60.00	Philip Smith -Travel expenses table tennis	27.00
Active East Herts	344.00	JSM archery - Archery Tuition	60.00
	<b>404.00</b>	Ton Silvestri - Yoga instruction	50.00
			<b>137.00</b>
<b>Payments</b>			
Wages	Cleaning in March 2020		445.36
James Turner Limited	Work to boiler and showers		1756.80
Castle Water	Water		51.30
Pozitive Energy	Electricity		87.42
P. J. Andrews	Final payment for low-level roof installation		3312.00
			<b>5652.88</b>
<b>Receipts</b>			
HMRC	VAT rebate for 02.2020		327.36
			<b>327.36</b>

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council – May 2020

<b>Petty Cash – Receipts</b>		<b>Petty cash - Payments</b>	
None		BT – phone line package includes calls -28.01.20	26.56
			<b>26.56</b>
<b>Payments</b>			
Wages and Salaries	April 2020		1,312.14
David Payne	Maintenance work on sportsfield		47.50
Affinity	Water- incorrectly charged – trying to sort out corrected amount		228.00
Grass roots	War Memorial maintenance - April 2020		48.00
Frank Cooper	2 grass cuts at £60 per cut plus VAT		144.00
J. Allsop	£59.99 Microsoft 365 annual sub + £2.99 white pen		62.98
East Herts Council	Emptying 3 dog waste bins 65 times 01.04.20 - 31.03.21		473.76
JRB Enterprise Limited	5 boxes of dog waste bags		145.20
Adam Welch	Cut back growth at entrance to allotments		90.00
			<b>2,551.58</b>
<b>Receipts</b>			
East Herts Council	1 <sup>st</sup> of 2 annual precept payments (half-year)		18,382.50
Jo Jamison Da Silva	Allotment rent and deposit payment		67.25
Nationwide	Monthly interest		29.24
Santander	Monthly interest		12.52
			<b>18,491.51</b>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

<b>Petty Cash – Receipts</b>		<b>Petty Cash -Payments</b>	
None		None	
<b>Payments</b>			
Abi Short (Williams)	Covid-19 rent return for March 2020		40.00
Castle Water	Water		51.30
Affinity Water	Estimated bill		88.07
E-on	Final bill – overcharged being contested via British Gas		390.85
D. P. Electrics	Annual emergency light and PAT testing		50.00
Wages	Daily external toilet cleaning – April 2020		200.00
Pozitive Energy	Electricity		26.78
British Gas	Gas -being contested with British Gas – see E-on above		130.05
P. J. Andrews	Deposit for high level roof		5,850.00
			<b>6,827.05</b>
<b>Receipts</b>			
EHDC	Grant re Covid-19		10,000.00
Santander	Monthly interest		2.89
HMRC	VAT rebate for 02.2020		236.63
			<b>10,239.52</b>

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council – 16<sup>th</sup> June 2020

<b>Petty Cash – Receipts</b>		<b>Petty cash - Payments</b>	
None		BT – phone line package includes calls -28.01.20	26.90
			<b>26.90</b>
<b>Payments</b>			
Wages and Salaries	May 2020		1,312.14
BHIB	Annual insurance		1,391.21
Jono Meischke	Artwork and signs for Lammas information board		260.00
David Payne			165.00
Stuart McCash	Internal Audit of PC accounts		250.00
Grassroots	War Memorial maintenance - May 2020		48.00
Frank Cooper	2 grass cuts at £60 per cut plus VAT		144.00
Dr. Emma Waltham	NP domain name, hosting and fees		103.19
Bidwell	Allotment 6-month rent		335.00
			<b>4,008.54</b>
<b>Receipts</b>			
Nationwide	Monthly interest		17.31
Santander	Monthly interest		12.94
Sarah Nesfield	Allotment rent and deposit payment		67.25
			<b>97.50</b>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments
None		None
<b>Payments</b>		
Castle Water	Water	51.30
British Gas	Electricity	20.15
McCash and Hay	Annual audit	158.50
Wages	Daily external toilet cleaning – May 2020	200.00
		<b>429.95</b>
<b>Receipts</b>		
HMRC	VAT rebate for 04.2020	627.97
		<b>627.97</b>

Parish Councillors approved the payments.

• **12-monthly statement of accounts for the Parish Council and Community Hall for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020**

On the 24<sup>th</sup> April, 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 2020.

Mr. Block said that the Parish Council income over expenditure showed a deficit of just over £3,000.

As mentioned at previous meetings, the hire of Community Hall facilities was disappointing.

• **PKF Littlejohn – external audit papers for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020**

PKF Littlejohn e-mailed, on 24<sup>th</sup> April, informing us of the details for the annual audit for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020. The completed Annual Return and all relevant documentation needs to be sent to PKF Littlejohn by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020.

Legislative changes have been made because of the restrictions imposed by the Coronavirus for the 2019/20 reporting year which mean that there is no requirement for a common period for public rights. The period for the exercise of public rights must however commence on or before 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 for a period of 6 weeks.

• **Internal Audit of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020**

Stuart McCash had completed the internal audit of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 with a clean bill of health.

• **Annual Return of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020**

The AGAR form was e-mailed to Parish Councillors on 3<sup>rd</sup> June and again on 15<sup>th</sup> June.

Section 1 – Annual governance statement	
We acknowledge as members of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including the preparation of the accounting statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the accounting statements for the year ended 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2020 that,	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	Yes
2. We have maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	Yes
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practice that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or on its finances.	Yes
4. We have provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors’ rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	Yes
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	Yes
6. We have maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	Yes
7. We have taken appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	Yes
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on the authority and, where appropriate have included them in the accounting statements.	Yes

9. Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our responsibility fund(s) assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit	N/A
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Cllr. Block asked the Parish Council to approve the Annual Governance questions as listed below.

Parish Councillors agreed that the Annual governance statement detailed in section one (listed above) of the Annual Return, together with section two, the accounting statement 2019/20, be approved and signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

The Clerk will send the completed Annual Return and relevant documentation to PKF Littlejohn (official auditors) by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Audit of the Community Hall accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020**

All Parish Councillors were e-mailed (on 12<sup>th</sup> June) a copy of the audited Community Hall accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020. Parish Councillors approved the audited Community Hall accounts and agreed that Cllr. Smith sign two copies of the accounts, one of which will be returned to McCash and Hay.

**Action: M. Smith/J. Allsop**

- **Update Asset registers for 2020/21**

The Asset registers are in the process of being updated.

- **Microsoft software – annual renewal**

The Microsoft 365 software on the Parish Council’s Dell laptop automatically renewed at the beginning of April and a payment of £59.99 was taken from the Clerk’s credit card. The Clerk has been reimbursed.

- **BHIB - Annual Insurance**

The Parish Council entered into a 3-year long term undertaking with BHIB Insurance Limited on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2019. Parish Councillors agreed via e-mail to renew the policy at an annual cost of £1391.21.

### Community Hall Trustees

Cllr. Meischke provided the following reports which he e-mailed to all Parish Councillors on 15<sup>th</sup> June.

- **Reopening of the Community Hall**

I am attending a Zoom meeting of East Herts Village Halls and Community Buildings Consortium Network on Thursday and hope to have more news on what the current situation is and what we need to be doing, but do know we will need a Coronavirus Risk Assessment doing.

Hand sanitizers were ordered some time ago and the bottles have arrived with extra bottles of the correct hand cleaner, however the dispensers for the sanitizers have not yet turned up so we may need to look at a temporary measure for this

Our Fire Risk Document and a Covid Risk assessment both require a walk round by at least three of the Trustees. I think we can achieve this with all the doors open and making sure we all keep a safe distance from one another, also have only one person touching anything.

- **Maintenance**

The hall top roof replacement has started but due to an error by the supplier wrong screws were supplied so work has been postponed until the Saturday.

I have been calling into the Hall every three days to run the water from all outlets to prevent legionaries in the system. Unfortunately, I have not been turning on the lights in the toilets therefore the extractor fans have not been working. Having realised this I have tried them and 4 of them are not working, one I have repaired but the 3 in the front of the hall need an electrician so I have called D. P. Electrics who are looking at them on Tuesday so maybe able to report at the meeting.

Additional to the e-mailed report: Electrician visited the Community Hall and can replace fans for about £30 each. Bigger ones would have cost about £50 each but would be too strong for the room size.

- **Watton Place Clinic**

The Clinic has asked if they can use the Hall for administering the Flu injections sometime at the end of September to start of October. I meet with Stephany and Melanie the Practice Manager at the Hall last week to see if we could accommodate them safely and devised a one-way system using the Pavilion and Meeting room. They are happy with the arrangement and would like to go ahead with a provisional booking once we have all agreed to this and given them a price. They are expecting around 1000 people from Watton and surrounding villages to attend so are looking at probably 3 days from 8.30 till around 16.00 but cannot be more specific until they know the take up numbers. The 3 days are likely to be Wednesdays each week for 3 weeks, not 3 days one after another. I feel we should be seen to be helping to support this and would like to give them a discount on the charge which would be £12 per hour for the Pavilion and the Meeting room, if we say 8 hours for each day that’s £96 per day x 3 = £288 total, as we don’t know at the moment how many hours they will be using it, rather than agree a price we need to agree a discount on the hourly rate. Also, we need to keep in mind, do we ask them to clean up as we usually do, or do we get our (now Covid trained) cleaners in, which will be a cost to us?

Your thoughts on this prior to the meeting might help, as a starter to this I am leaning toward them cleaning up but with a 50% discount, this helps to cover our costs, i.e.: heating lights etc.

Additional to the e-mailed report: Cllr. Meischke has informed Watton Place Clinic that he will get back to them after he has attended the village halls Zoom meeting on Thursday.

He said that we need to find out who is responsible for cleaning the hall after a hiring, the hirer or ourselves.

Cllr. McCash suggested that hall could be left unused for a couple of days after doctors use it. Cllr. Meischke agreed this would be an ideal situation however hirers are asking when they can use the hall again and if we can open up, then we should allow them to use the hall. In addition, the doctors are looking to hire the hall right up until November and Cllr. Meischke hoped by then that the hall would be almost back to normal.

Cllr. Hammon said that having read a risk assessment around the coronavirus issue, it is amazingly detailed. She said it would be extremely useful if Cllr. Meischke could find out during the East Herts Village Halls Zoom meeting on Thursday how much of a risk assessments we need to do and if different types are required for different types of hiring, such as parties and sporting activities. Cllr. Hammon was concerned about the huge potential risk of spreading the coronavirus that 1,000 visitors to the hall could cause, even if they are being brought in at six persons at a time for their vaccinations.

Cllr. Meischke said that the village halls meeting should tell us what we need to do to open up the Community Hall and the government have already said they are producing a generic type risk assessment form which we would only need to do once. It would be the same as we do a risk assessment for the fire for the hall which all forms part of the hire agreement. As part of a new hire agreement the hirer would be required do their own risk assessment. If it is written out in a generic form, we should be able to alter it to fit our purpose and then that can be bolted to the hire agreement form.

Cllr. Hammon suggested that if the doctors do hire the hall that we should also see their risk assessment. She expressed her concerns should a coronavirus outbreak in Watton-at-Stone be found to come from the use of the Community Hall. She wanted the Parish Council to ensure that if anything went wrong that we can show that we did the right thing.

Cllr. McCash said that the doctors have asked if they can borrow four Gazebos from the church should cover be needed due to weather conditions.

### **Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee**

Cllr. Knight provided the following report which he e-mailed to all Parish Councillors on 15<sup>th</sup> June.

- **Tennis courts – closing and opening**

The courts were closed from 23<sup>rd</sup> March in line with government guidelines and reopened on 13<sup>th</sup> May. Guidelines are in place and a notice posted on the courts. No formal Tennis Club activity is happening and guidance from the LTA is awaited. Casual doubles games only are being played

- **Tennis courts – maintenance**

Pressure washing of the courts was scheduled for and budgeted for at the end of March but delayed. I now would recommend that this goes ahead at an approximately cost of £850.

All Parish Councillors were in agreement.

**Action: I. Knight**

- **Cricket - up- date**

Nets are being used at present. In mid-July, a decision will be taken as to whether friendly matches will start and whether the league will start for half the season.

### **Environment Sub-Committee**

Cllr. Dinnin provided a report on the following item, which she e-mailed to all Parish Councillors on 15<sup>th</sup> June.

- **Lammas**

The design for the new information boards has been accepted and delivered. Jono Meischke kindly made 3 for the price of 2. Need to get Mark Blacktin to install.

General state of the Lammas is very good, although litter is causing some problems due to the number of people walking there at the moment, but rubbish bins have been emptied regularly.”

Cllr. Meischke said that he had one thing to add to this item.

After receiving the new information boards from Jono Meischke, he asked Mark Blacktin if he could install them together with the byelaw signs. Mark was not happy about doing the work and said it would cost around £100 per sign to fit them. Cllr. Meischke told him not to bother and got in touch with Mark Lee who can mount each of the boards on a weatherproof backboard, with beading around the edges all for under £100. Cllr. Meischke said he would fit the signs on the posts himself.

Parish Councillors approved this course of action.

**Action: J. Meischke**

- **Watton Green – information board**

Cllr. Meischke said that he cannot get anywhere near the information board at Watton Green because the area is overgrown with brambles etc. It was agreed that Cllr. Dinnin ask Adam Welch to quote for clearing the growth. Cllr. Smith confirmed that this work would not cross over with the grass cutting work that Jeff Skidmore does on Watton Green.

**Action: C. Dinnin**

Cllr. Dinnin provided a report on the following item which she e-mailed to all Parish Councillors on 15<sup>th</sup> June.

- **Allotments**

All allotments are now let with 1 person on the waiting list. There have been 10 new tenants this year. All plots are in some form of cultivation with over 90% doing extremely well - will continue to monitor.

Had an e-mail from Jo Cox an allotment holder at the Church end on the site, her third paragraph re standpipes needs discussing - I will e-mail her letter to you and I will deal with paras 2 and 4.

Cllr. Dinnin said that Jill Cox's plot is near the big standpipe. After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed to monitor the situation. Cllr. Smith said that there is not enough water pressure for another standpipe.

Jill Cox to be informed accordingly.

**Action: C. Dinnin**

Parish Councillors agreed that the allotments are looking good.

Cllr. Stock provided a report on the following item which he e-mailed to all Parish Councillors on 15<sup>th</sup> June.

- **War Memorial**

Cllr. Stock has been monitoring the condition of the site and been in contact with Ben Storey (Grassroots) accordingly to ensure that the work necessary to meet the objective of the Management Plan is carried out; naturally the restrictions imposed by Lockdown had an impact initially. Currently the working relations between the Parish Council and Grassroots are working well and the site continues to look fresh and clean.

In addition to the checks done as part of the Monthly Village-Report, Parish Councillors are asked to notify Cllr. Stock of any issues if and when they arise, so that he can get them resolved.

## b) Routine Reports

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

As reported earlier, Cllr. Meischke has been going up to the hall every 2-3 days and running the water to prevent the risk of legionnaires disease.

### 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.

The Clerk said that at the end of our contract with e-on they had overcharged the Community Hall by £100.26. This has now been repaid back into our bank account.

Affinity Water also overcharged the Parish Council for allotment water and we have received a rebate of £197.91.

Castle Water has now taken over the charging for the Parish Council and Community Hall water supplies. Both accounts need recalculating as they appear to be overestimating on usage. The Clerk has contacted them about the Parish Council account but has yet to speak to them about the Community Hall usage.

**Action: J. Allsop**

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

Nothing to report.

### iv) Monthly village-report

Cllr. Jancey completed the report on 27<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> May 2020. Negative items only are highlighted.

- **Sportsfield** - Strimming needed around sportsfield benches

- **Allotment entrance** - Adam Welch cut back the hedging on the left-hand side but Cllr. Jancey felt this could have been cut back further. The right-hand side is overhanging the entrance, but this is the responsibility of Glebe Court and they cut all their hedges on an annual basis.

Cllr. Dinnin said that the owners of the houses at the entrance of the allotments used to cut back the hedging on the left hand side, but when the ownership changed hands the new owners put up fencing on their side of the hedge and claimed that the hedge was not their responsibility. Since then the Parish Council has been cutting this hedge back.

Cllr. McCash said that when the owners of the property next to the War Memorial contacted her about changing his fence along their adjoining boundary, he said he was also going to do work to the trees at the end of his garden.

The Yew tree in the Chestnuts garden at the far end of the allotments has not been cut back and is still overhanging the fence. Cllr. Dinnin said that we wrote to the Woodhall Estate tenants in February, who are responsible for the hedge, as well as e-mailing Lindsay Holt (Woodhall Estate) in March. The Clerk to chase.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Mill building** – cleared of rubbish.

- **BT phone box** – weeds around bottom.

Cllr. Jancey asked if she could now instruct her decorator, Ricky Thomson, to paint the telephone box with red enamel paint. She said he would be able to start work in a few weeks' time. Parish Councillors were in agreement. Cllr. Jancey to instruct Ricky Thomson accordingly.

**Action: K. Jancey**

### v) Weekly sportsfield

Nothing to report.

vi) **Weekly defibrillator inspection**

Cllr. Hammon says she continues to do inspections most weeks and records them in the diary provided.

vii) **Website/Facebook**

Nothing to report.

viii) **Highway and Lighting faults**

Nothing to report.

ix) **Dog fouling reports**

Cllr. Smith said that Mr. Moray, who fills the dog waste bag dispenser on footpath 17, is getting though a lot of dog waste bags at the moment. This might be reflected on the fact more people have been home since lockdown.

x) **Police reports**

No report provided by the Police.

## 9. Correspondence received

a) **E-mail from Mr. Ian McCredie concerning litterbin at Mill Lane**

Mr. McCredie e-mailed on the 5<sup>th</sup> June as follows.

“I attach hereto a photo of the bin at the entrance to the Lammas in Mill Lane.

This overflowing of the bin is a common occurrence, especially in summer. Obviously, people are trying to do the right thing by putting their rubbish in the bins and not leaving it strewn about the Lammas. Surely you could be able to put in place two large bins at the entrance so that this unsightly and unhealthy occurrence is a thing of the past. I look forward to your response.”

Cllr. Knight said that he goes to Mill Lane on almost a daily basis and Mr. McCredie’s claims are an over exaggeration and it was just a one-off occasion. He said it would be an improvement to have a bigger bin, but he did not want the Parish Council to have the impression that it was a frequent occurrence. Cllr. Dinnin said that someone very kindly took the big black bags from underneath it.

Cllr. Meischke said that we have probably got a spare old unlidded bin in the cupboard that could be installed as a temporary measure. Cllr. Block said he had looked at the existing bin and was sure there was room for two bins back to back on the one post.

Cllrs. Meischke and Block to liaise about installing an additional bin.

**Action: J. Meischke/ S. Block**

The Clerk said that Rosemary Brown had reported to her that some of the new lidded litterbins are getting damaged. She thinks this damage is caused by the litterbin men when emptying the bins because they are not unlocking them to empty them. Rosemary had also reported that the big bin by the play area does not always get emptied because the litterbin people say they cannot open the bin. This bin is opened by putting a foot under the door to lift it.

Cllr. Smith said that Rosemary had also told him that the birds have worked out how to get the rubbish out of the lidded bins. The Clerk said that this only happens when the bins are bulging with rubbish and does not happen when they are less full.

Cllrs Block and Meischke to speak to Rosemary Brown and inspect the litterbin issues.

**Action: S. Block/J. Meischke**

Cllr. Jancey said she noted on Spotted in Watton that there was a comment that a dog bin is needed on the other side of the entrance to Watton nursery. Nick Fox (Woodhall Estate) is looking into installing a dog bin in this area. The Clerk to e-mail him to find out what is happening.

**Action: J. Allsop**

## 10. Village organisations

None.

## 11. Items for Parish News

The following items will be sent out with the July 2020 issues of the Parish News.

- Annual Parish Council and Community Hall reports

Mr. Knight said that only e-versions of the Parish News are currently being issued via e-mail and the reports would be attached to the e-mails. The Clerk said that she is putting copies of the Parish News on our website and a link on Facebook.

Copies of the annual Parish Council and Community Hall reports to be put on the Parish Council notice boards.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**The meeting closed 2015**

**The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020.**