

Minutes of the Zoom Parish Council meeting held on 21st July 2020

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

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

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies: Cllr. Kay Jancey.

2. Public participation

None.

3. Chairman's/ Clerk's report

Police report – Cllr. Smith asked Parish Councillors if they had all seen PCSO Sally Brooks' police report, which was e-mailed to all Parish Councillors early this afternoon.

Parish Councillors confirmed they had seen the report and were happy with it.

4. Declaration of interests

None.

5. Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 16th June 2020**

Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved.

- **Report and updates on items due to be discussed at meeting cancelled on Tuesday 17th March 2020**

There is an error in the final item under item 8 a, Community Hall Trustees – Hire of Hall cancellations.

“The Community Hall building was closed on Tuesday 17th October to all hires,”

Should read:

“The Community Hall building was closed on Tuesday 17th March to all hirers,”

Parish Councillors approved the amendment and agreed that the Chairman should sign an amended copy of this report.

Action: M. Smith

b) Review of actions

1. **Monitor path up to the tennis courts re uneven paving slabs**

Cllr. Meischke said that he would be inspect the footpath with Cllrs. Stock and Block tomorrow.

Action: J. Meischke/D. Stock/S. Block

2. **Liaise with Beanebytes re website conforming to new legislation**

Refer to item 7 d, Specific items - Website updates required to conform to new legislation

3. **Contact Castle Water re Community Hall billing:** Outstanding.

Action: J. Allsop

4. **Contact Woodhall estate re Yew tree overhanging the allotments**

Nick Fox (Woodhall estate) informed the Clerk that he was having the work done.

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

5. **Instruct Ricky Thomson to paint the BT phone box**

The BT phone box has been painted and Parish Council agreed it looks excellent.

c) Action points resolved

1. Arrange Trustees meeting

2. Write to planning department re Gregorys Farm, Dane End (3/20/0870/LBC)

3. Write to planning department re Gregorys Farm, Dane End (3/20/0869/FUL)

4. Write to planning department re Lamsden House Blue Hill Farm (3/20/0864/HH)

5. Write to planning department re 15 Rivershill (3/20/0964/HH)
6. Write to planning department re 31 Moorymead Close (3/20/1017/HH)
7. Write to planning department re Barn 4 Gregorys Farm (3/20/1038/NMA)
8. Renew the licence access across the Land known as the "Old Cottage Site"
9. Renew the ferreting licences
10. Arrange for engraving and purchase of keepsake trophy
11. Send completed Annual Return and relevant documentation to PKF Littlejohn
12. Sign and return copy of Community Hall audited accounts to McCash & Hay
13. Arrange for the tennis courts to be pressure washed

14. Install information boards on Lammas and Watton Green

Cllr. Meischke said that the information board on the Lammas had been installed.

However, said he was waiting on Adam Welch clearing the area of plant growth before he could fit the Watton Green board.

Action: J. Meischke

15. Ask Adam Welch for quote to clear around Watton Green information board
16. E-mail Jill Cox re allotment standpipe
17. Liaise re installing an additional bin in Mill Lane
18. Speak to Rosemary Brown about litterbin issues
19. **Contact Nick Fox re locating a dog bin near entrance of Watton Nursery**
Refer to item 8 b, Reports – Monthly village report, final item.
20. Publish Annual Parish Council and Community Hall reports

d) Action points outstanding for more than two months

1. Chase EHDC re ownership of Mill Lane dog bin & request for larger bin

The Clerk has been in contact with EHDC concerning this bin, but the conversation was leading to scrutiny of our current arrangements. Cllr. Smith suggested that we stick with what we have and monitor the situation, which is probably skewed by the pandemic.

Cllr. Meischke agreed with this course of action and said that now that he and Cllr. Block had fitted another litterbin it might resolve the problem, because dog waste can be disposed of in litterbins.

Parish Councillors to monitor the situation.

Action: Parish Councillors

Cllr. McCash said that the litterbin at the top of footpath 17, at its junction with Church Lane, rarely gets emptied. She said that she and the Rectory often empty the bin and dispose of the rubbish.

The Clerk to ask EHDC to empty the bin regularly.

Action: J. Allsop

2. Investigate lock on Great Innings notice board: outstanding.

Action: J. Meischke/J. Allsop

3. Meet with Richard Wing (Scouts) about facilities re land at Mill Lane

Cllr. Smith reported that he had been in contact with Mr. Wing who has updated him concerning the Scouts and confirms that they have been meeting via Zoom. He said that they had received a £10,000 grant with no strings attached. A preplanning submission was rejected because it was considerably larger than existing. They accept that it will be more difficult to raise funds in the future and that they were looking at a more modest building of modular design or perhaps a barn of agricultural design with facilities built within. He asked if the PC stood by their commitment of giving £25,000 to the project as it would be a big boost to match funding applications.

Cllr. Smith said that the Clerk informed him that we have no minutes agreeing a grant of £25,000, although the Parish Council have discussed this figure.

Parish Councillors agreed to formally minute their intention to grant the Scout and Guide Group £25,000 towards a new Scout building. Cllr. Smith to notify Richard Wing accordingly.

Action: M. Smith

4. Arrange for the minute books to be bound: outstanding.

Action: J. Allsop

5. Obtain insurance certificate from cleaners: outstanding.

Action: J. Meischke

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) Land at Walkern Road (3/20/1090/FUL)

Creation of a new vehicular access from Walkern Road to agricultural land and barns at Blue Bury Farm
Parish Councillors agreed a no comment response.

ii) 147 High Street (3/20/1126/HH)

Proposed garage conversion with single storey link extension to main house incorporating a roof canopy over existing entrance door and alterations to fenestration

Parish Councillors agreed a no comment response.

iii) 6 Hazeldell (3/20/1132/HH)

Single storey rear extension with replacement pitched roof and roof lights over existing extension

Parish Councillors agreed a no comment response.

iv) HCC Depot, Station Road (3/18/2764/OUT)

Outline application for the erection of 14 residential units and 26 proposed car parking spaces

This was a notification that this 2018 outline planning application was due to be presented to the Development committee on 15th July 2020. Cllr. Smith said he reviewed the meeting after it had taken place via a YouTube link and that concerns were raised by Peter Aknai, who lives next to the depot site, concerning over shadowing largely due to the topography of the site in relation to Hazeldell. However the Chairman was at pains to point out that the purpose of this meeting was to agree that the application met the requirements of the current development plan in principle and that other concerns would be addressed as and when a detailed application was submitted. The planning committee agreed that the plans did meet the requirements. Reference was made to the fact that Watton is a Group 1 village and was expected to deliver housing. No reference was made to the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

There were no objections and the application was granted.

7. Reports

a) Neighbourhood plan and Gains Committee – progress reports

Cllr. Waltham provided the following report which was e-mailed to all Parish Councillors on 20th July.

“The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) group met via Zoom on 1st July and agreed to work towards starting the Regulation 14 consultation in August. A brochure is in preparation which will be distributed to all households. Cllr. Waltham has made a grant application and is awaiting a response from Locality UK. The Woodhall Estate has e-mailed to say that they are not able to participate in helping prepare the Local Green Space designations, as they do not feel they could explain why each area is 'demonstrably special', even though they are the landowner. They would prefer to engage at Regulation 14 stage instead. The next NP meeting is on 29th July, via Zoom.”

Cllr. Waltham said that she had nothing to add to her report but wanted to discuss with the Parish Council the issue of youth football in the village. She said she had been unable to get the Woodhall Estate back on board so that the Mill Lane site could be assessed.

Cllr. Smith e-mailed all Parish Councillors details of the discussions he had with Anthony Parker of EAS Transport Planning Limited regarding the Mill Lane site. This was originally reported at the February Parish Council meeting. Mr. Parker had stated that based on the details provided to them, he believed the Mill Lane site is viable, although he cannot guarantee a successful planning application. EAS Transport Planning Limited estimated cost for carry out a transport statement of the Mill Lane site to support a planning application for pitches is £1,900 excluding VAT and expenses. A further £1,500 may be needed for a traffic safety audit, however EAS thought this unlikely as the usage was mostly off peak.

After lengthy discussions, Parish Councillors agreed that if the Woodhall Estate do not agree to pay for the transport statement for the Mill Lane site, then the Parish Council should pay for it to progress things forward. If the site is viable, the Parish Council will hope to reclaim the costs involved from the Woodhall Estate. If it is not viable then the Parish Council will need to push Woodhall Estate to put forward an alternative site.

Cllr. Smith said that the Parish Council need to have written confirmation that Woodhall Estate have agreed to put the Mill Lane site forward for recreation. Cllr. Waltham said that the NP Group do have a letter from the Woodhall Estate, which she agreed to find and forward to Cllr. Smith. **Action: E. Waltham**

Cllr. Smith asked Cllr. Waltham to explain what regulation 14 was. She said that it was basically the plan that now needs to be consulted on. The full plan will need to be uploaded to the NP website and a brochure created to be sent to all households in the parish. She said that there is not really anything new since the last exhibition apart from the revision of some of the policies to take into consideration some of the comments received. The major omission at the exhibition is that there was not enough information on recreation facilities. All NP Group members are currently working to get the brochure finished.

It was agreed that Cllr. Smith arrange a meeting with Lindsay Holt (Woodhall Estate) to discuss issues relating to the Mill Lane site. If a meeting is agreed, Cllrs. Smith and Meischke to attend and Cllr. Hammon if it is an evening meeting. **Action: M. Smith**

Cllr. Smith asked if Jacqueline Veater would give himself and Cllrs Meischke and Stock access to the NP Zoom meeting on 29th July. Cllr. Waltham agreed to arrange this. **Action: E. Waltham**

b) Traffic in the High Street

Nothing to report.

c) Footpaths

Cllr. Stock's report was e-mailed to all Parish Councillors on 15th July.

Cllr. Stock reported that the footpaths in Hazeldell had, in the main, now been Micro Surfaced (i.e. a covering of a black slurry material spread across the existing surfaces) with varying degrees of success, for example:

- some weeds are already growing through the surface
- some areas have not been completed
- the entrance to Hazeldell from the bottom end of Station Road has not been treated
- the work to repair "defected" areas before the micro-surfacing of footpaths was in fact done after the team doing the micro-surfacing had appeared to have completed its tasks and left
- at least one section of footpath marked-up for significant "defect" repair work was covered with micro-surfacing before it could be carried out (a particularly uneven section prone to significant ponding)
- due to being laid during very hot weather there is much evidence of damage and scuffing from vehicle movements
- there remains a number of areas that are susceptible to ponding during wet weather and therefore also subject to freezing during the winter (a problem that in this case cannot be resolved by micro-surfacing).

Although from a visual viewpoint the footpaths are much improved it is disappointing that the above issues have been identified and noted.

Cllr. Stock e-mailed (15th July) County Cllr. Crofton to thank him for his efforts in helping us to achieve the improvements and also draw his attention to the above and ask whether or not he is aware of any inspections and/or works outstanding. In reply he has written to his Highways Officer and Andy Dunk at Kiely Bros asking them to make an urgent site inspection and respond directly to Cllr. Stock.

All Parish Councillors were happy with report.

d) Website updates required to conform to new legislation

Cllr. Smith reported as follows.

Parish Councillors will recall that public bodies disseminating information via a website need to be compliant with accessibility requirements. These largely concern the ability to navigate the site without a mouse, i.e. Tabbing, and making PDF documents consistently readable. It was agreed that we should ask Beanebytes to give us a feasibility assessment. Meanwhile the Clerk flagged up "<https://myparishcouncil.co.uk/parish-council>" which advertised that it would provide a template that was compliant with current requirements, migrate our information onto it and make sure that we remained fully compliant. It also claimed that it was easy to update ourselves and would cost £10 per month. Cllr. Stock has asked Beanebytes to hold back while we investigate this offer.

e) Awarding of Parish Council trophies

Cllr. Smith said that the Parish Council's 'Good Citizenship Award' trophy has been awarded in school to Chaya Grandage.

Cllr. Smith said his daughter, Nicola Roberts, has agreed to ask the Parents if the Parish Council can use Chaya's name on Facebook and our website to announce the awarding of this trophy.

Cllr. Smith to chase.

Action: M. Smith

This trophy is awarded 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.

f) Sports and Social Club**• Parish Council Charges to Sports and Social Club**

At a meeting of Cllrs. Smith, Meischke and Knight, it was agreed that a recommendation would be made to the Parish Council that the charges for quarter 1 would be 0, for quarter 2 would be 50% of the budgeted charge and quarter 3 and quarter 4 would be 100% of the budgeted charge or this financial year (2020 / 2021).

The change is made because there was no tennis and cricket club activity in quarter 1 and only limited organised club activity in quarter 2. It is assumed all will be back to normal for quarter 3 and quarter 4.

Parish Councillors approved the charges. The Clerk to invoice the Sports and Social Club accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

8. Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

Cllr. Block provided a report for the following items.

- **Monthly accounts**

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty cash - Payments	
None		None	
Payments			
Jane Allsop	June salary plus mobile phone allowance		1,022.54
HMRC	Tax & Ni		231.12
Rosemary Brown	32 hours litterpick		289.60
Castle Water	Allotment to September 2020		246.81
Community Hall	1/2-year grant		3,875.00
Grassroots	War Memorial maintenance - May 2020		48.00
Mark Lee	work to information boards		120.00
David Payne	Maintenance work on sportsfield		45.00
John Meischke	printer ink		16.99
Frank Cooper	2 grass cuts at £60 per cut plus VAT		144.00
Concord Trophies	engraving and one keep sake trophy		18.99
Adam Welch	part of invoice for £1395		90.00
J. Allsop	BT phone bill to 29th June - £26.76, Laminating pouches -		42.40
HCC	10 reams of A4 paper + Velcro dots		32.75
Adam Welch	part of invoice for £1395		1,305.00
Ricky Thompson	Prepare and paint K6 red phone box		530.00
Rosemary Brown	32 hours litterpick		289.60
			8,347.80
Receipts			
Affinity Water	Rebate on overcharge of Allotment water		197.91
Nationwide	Monthly interest		16.75
			214.66

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
None		None	
Payments			
P. J Andrews	Final 50% payment for high level roof		5,850.00
D. P. Electrics	to supply and fit 3 new inline fans		170.00
Herts Fire Protection	Annual fire equipment inspection		100.80
H. D. Cleaning - May	Daily outside toilet cleaning - June		200.00
British Gas	Electricity		34.06
Sports Courts	pressure wash 3 courts		1,020.00
HCC	Cleaning materials		281.38
Rosemary Brown	9.5 hours cleaning @ £9.05 per hour		85.98
Jane Allsop	Robert Dyas – 2 pedal bins £54.93, Amazon 100 facemasks		77.83
			7,820.05
Receipts			
Santander	Bank interest		2.89
Parish Council	½ year grant		3875.00
HMRC	VAT rebate for May 2020		983.43
			4861.32

Parish Councillors approved the payments

- **3-monthly statement of accounts for the Parish Council and Community Hall**

These were e-mailed out on 17/07/2020.

The main items of note are:

Parish Council-Annual Insurance Fee	£1,391.21
Precept	£18,382.50
Community Hall-Final payment of low-level roof	£2,760.00
EHDC Covid-19 Grant	£10,000.00

Parish Councillors approved the accounts.

- **3-monthly inspection of the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts**
 Cllr. Block carried out the inspection on Monday 20th July and everything was in order.
 Cllr. McCash thanked Cllr. Block for doing the inspection on her behalf.
- **Subscription to Parish Online – digital mapping for local council**
 Cllr. Block said that in September 2019, at the request of the Neighbourhood Plan group, the Parish Council signed up for Parish Online’s digital mapping at a cost of £150 plus VAT.
 Cllr. Waltham confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan group would like this renewed for another year.
 The renewal price is currently unknown.
 Parish Councillors agreed to renew the subscription to Parish online. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **CPRE – Annual membership**
 Parish Councillors agreed to renew the CPRE annual subscription of £36. **Action: J. Allsop**

Community Hall Trustees

Cllr. Meischke reported on the following items.

- **Report on Trustees meeting held on 14th July 2020**
 All Parish Councillors were e-mailed (on 17th July) a copy of the Trustees minutes.
 Cllr. Meischke highlighted the main points.
 - **Community Hall Hire agreement**
 The hire agreement has been remodelled to include Covid-19 action required by hirers.
 This will be issued to all regular hirers for signing as well as casual hirers.
 The Sports and Social Club agreement is a separate issue.
 - **Maximum numbers**
 Cllr. Meischke will put up notices in the Community Hall showing the following maximum number of persons in each room. This will be reviewed as and when government guideline change.
 - 12 Pavilion
 - 25 Main Hall
 - 2 Kitchen
 - 3 Library/Meeting room
 Parish Councillors were in agreement.
 - **Opening of the Community Hall**
 The hall will officially open from 27th but the first hirer will return to the hall on Monday 3rd August.
 The Clerk to contact the Trustees re all casual hiring requests for parties before it can be agreed. The hirer must agree to abide to the maximum number of persons posted in the hall.
 Cllr. Smith thanked Cllr. Meischke for all his hard work in getting the hall open again.

Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee

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

- **Tennis Court Washing**
 All three courts have been pressure washed and treated with moss kill by Sports Courts. They did a good job!

Not on the agenda

- **Notice re Tennis Club Priority times**
 It was agreed at the January Parish Council meeting that new notices would be put up to cover a minor change in Tennis Club priority times but also to refer to the Tennis Club rather than the Sports and Social club- Would like approval these notices be obtained. These priority times should also go on the Parish Council website. Temporary notices have been put up.

	COURT A – Old Courts	COURT B – New Court
Monday	1400 to 2130	1730 to 2130
Tuesday	1400 to 2130	
Wednesday	1400 to 2130	1730 to 2130
Thursday	1400 to 2130	1730 to 2130
Friday	1400 to 2130	
Saturday	1300 to 2130	
Sunday	0900 to 1300	

Parish Councillors were in agreement.

The Clerk to arrange for the new notices to be made.

Action: J. Allsop

Environment Sub-Committee

Cllr. Dinnin provided a report on the following item, which she e-mailed to all Parish Councillors on 16th July.

- **Lammas**
The grass has been cut and the gaps have been re-cut along the riverbank.
New signs put up, and it now looks very cared for and attractive.
The only problem is the rubbish, despite the bins being emptied regularly there is always a lot of rubbish lying around.
- **Watton Green**
New board ready to go up. To make sure it can be accessible for Cllr. Meischke to put the new information poster up and then for people to be able to get near enough to read it I have asked Adam Welch to clear the overgrown branches and vegetation in this area at a cost of £95.
Adam has not done the work yet but will do it this week or early next.
- **Allotments**
Cllr. Dinnin said that the allotments are all let and in good condition.
Cllr. Smith to arrange for the grass in the disused area of the allotments to be cut. **Action: M. Smith**
Cllr Dinnin said that the wire fence adjacent to the gate along the footpath to the Church is broken and needs replacing with something more substantial. This prevents dogs getting through onto the allotment area. Cllrs. Dinnin and Smith to inspect and agreed what action is required. **Action: C. Dinnin/M. Smith**
Cllr. Dinnin said that the Yew tree overhanging the allotments has been cut back but should have been cut back further. No further action required at this time.
- **School lane**
Adam has done a light cut to the hedge along School Lane, cutting back brambles and nettles.
Jeff Skidmore Contractors will be doing a full hedge cut in late August/early September.

b) Routine Reports

- i) **Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests**
Cllr. Meischke continues to inspect the hall regularly including running the water every 2-3 days 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.
- iii) **Weekly reports - Fire Inspection and shower tests**
Done.
- iv) **Monthly village-report**
Cllr. Waltham completed the report on 20th July 2020. Negative items only are highlighted.
 - **Sportsfield**
 - **Litter** in ditch next to tennis court.
Cllr. Meischke said he would inspect and arrange for the litter to be cleared. **Action: J. Meischke**
 - **Bench** – next to the large swings is broken, one of the seating slats has fallen off.
Cllr. Meischke said he would inspect the bench with Cllrs. Stock and Block tomorrow. **Action: J. Meischke/D. Stock/S. Block**
 - **Allotment access** – Glebe court hedge encroaching.
Cllr. Dinnin said that, as previously reported, the hedge on the right-hand side of the entrance to the allotments belongs to Glebe Court and they are responsible for having it cut back.
The Clerk to contact District Cllr. Sophie Bell asking her to request that Clarion Housing have the hedge cut. **Action: J. Allsop**
 - **Church Walk dog waste bin** - wonky.
 - **General comments:** a tree from the walled garden next to the village sign is now overhanging the pavement – only short people can pass!
Cllr. Smith said he would arrange for the overhanging branches to be cut back. **Action: M. Smith**
 - **Prospective dog bin near entrance of Watton Nursery**
The Clerk agreed to obtain costings for purchase and emptying of one dog bin for Nick Fox so he could present these figures to the Woodhall Estate for their approval.
Cllr. Smith suggested that if the Woodhall Estate do not agree to install a dog waste bin then HCC could be asked if they would install one as part of the A602 improvement scheme.
Cllr. Meischke agreed this was a good idea and he would contact HCC without delay. **Action: J. Meischke**

- v) **Weekly sportsfield**
None.
- vi) **Weekly defibrillator inspection**
Cllr. Waltham inspected the defibrillator on 20th July, and all was in good order. Cllr. Hammon continues to do regular checks.
- vii) **Website/Facebook**
None.
- viii) **Highway and Lighting faults**
Nothing to report.
- ix) **Dog fouling reports**
Nothing to report.
- x) **Police reports**
PCSO Sally Brooks e-mailed her police report to the Clerk today. A copy was sent to all Parish Councillors prior to this meeting.

9. Correspondence received

None.

10. Village organisations

None.

11. Items for Parish News

None.

The meeting closed 2028.

The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 15th September 2020.