

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 21st September 2021

Present:	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
	Clerk: Jane Allsop	
	County Cllr. Ken Crofton and District Cllr. Sophie Bell	

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies: Cllrs. Stock and Waltham.

2. Public participation

None.

3. Chairman's/ Clerk's report

additional item under specific items

4. Declaration of interests

Cllr. McCash declared a personal interest in item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Allotment – General. (Cllr. McCash knows Fred Burnell).

5. Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 27th July 2021**
Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved and signed.

b) Review of actions

1. Confirm that improving parking in Rectory Lane has been added to the Neighbourhood Plan gains list
Cllr. Hammon agreed to do this.

Action: C. Hammon

c) Action points resolved

1. Renew annual subscription to Parish Online
2. Speak to Frank Cooper & son re grass cutting & gardening work around the sportsfield & Community Hall
3. Ask Adam Welch to apply weed where needed along School Lane
4. Keep file on e-mail exchanges between Parish Councillors concerning the play area & car park
5. Investigate aspects concerning a planning application for the car park extension
6. Accept Wicksteed Leisure's quotation for work to the play area
7. Accept Grassroots quotation to construct two entrances from Church Walk to the sportsfield
8. Reply to Carole Moore's e-mail concerning allotment clearance
9. Inspect the Lammas re strimming work that the contractors need to complete
10. Inspect the elder bush in the sportsfield hedge re visibility problems, with a view to it being remove
11. Carry-out emergency lighting tests

6. Planning

a) Applications

The following planning application was dealt with via e-mail and letters put through the doors of residents as and when required. The Parish Council agreed no comment responses to all the applications below.

i) **5 Watton House (3/21/1913/FUL)**

Proposed roof terrace with access hatch & external guarding

ii) **14 Hazeldell (3/21/2061/PNHH)**

Single storey rear extension: Depth 3.80 metres, Maximum height 3.75 metres, Eaves height 2.77 metres.

iii) **27 Hazeldell (3/21/2075/HH)**

Single storey rear extension

iv) **2 Rectory Lane (3/21/1454/HH)**

Retention of single storey rear extension

b) Decisions

- i) **60 Hazeldell (3/21/1712/HH)**
Single storey front & rear extensions with skylights - EHDC permission granted
- ii) **18 Lammas Road (3/21/1696/HH)**
Single storey front extension - EHDC permission granted
- iii) **Hilltop, Gregorys Farm (3/21/0806/FUL)**
Change of use from holiday lettings to single residential dwelling & change of use of land to residential curtilage (retrospective) - EHDC permission refused
- iv) **23 Moorymead Close (3/21/1798/HH)**
Garage conversion, replace garage door with front window, new front roof window opening in pitched roof, enlarged ground floor front window & alterations to rear fenestration - EHDC permission granted
- v) **3 Rectory Lane 3/21/1506/HH**
First floor side extension single storey rear extension & front porch - EHDC permission granted
Note: the September agenda incorrectly stated that this application had been refused.
- vi) **14 Hazeldell (3/21/2061/PNHH)**
Single storey rear extension: Depth 3.80 metres, Maximum height 3.75 metres, Eaves height 2.77 metres - EHDC - prior approval not required

7. Reports**a) Report from District Councillor Sophie Bell**

District Cllr. Sophie Bell said she had worked closely with officers regarding the planning application for 3 Rectory Lane, which lies within the conservation area.

Cllr. Bell said she had been working with planning officers re improved changing room facilities at Hartham leisure centre, which will also be a benefit of users from our parish.

b) Neighbourhood plan and benefits

The NP group is liaising with AECOM to produce a Strategic Environmental Assessment, the purpose of which is to receive advice on whether proceeding with a footbridge in the Plan is advisable. The scoping report has been completed and is now in consultation. The scoping report consultation period will finish at the end of September. AECOM is working on the SEA report, and we expect to receive this in October. This will then be included in our Regulation 14 consultation, which we anticipate starting at the end of the month. Cllr. Waltham has applied for a grant to fund the remaining NP work.

Woodhall Estate has responded to our letter and Cllr. Hammond is drafting a response.

c) Sports and Social Club

Cllr. Meischke said this item remains on the agenda as a reminder and has been delayed due to Covid restrictions. He said he would get into discussion with Cllr. Knight in the near future.

This item to remain on the agenda.

Agenda: 09/2021

d) A602 improvement scheme

Cllr. Meischke said that he needs to contact the A602 team asking for funding towards speed cameras and remind them about the installation of the village gateway and the installation of a dog bin on the footpath just past Watton House and by the entrance to the footpath on to Woodhall Estate land. They had agreed to speak to District Council about this installation. **Action: J. Meischke**

Cllr. Meischke said that he would also be asking Herts Highways A602 to fund additional speed cameras for the village (refer to next bulleted item below).

Cllr. McCash said that residents of Watton House have received letters from the A602 team to say they will be working on the roundabout upgrades up to the Christmas period and will be undertaking snagging's in the New Year. She said that the residents of Watton House have suffered sleepless nights whilst heavy machinery worked during the night.

Cllr. Jancey said, and Parish Councillors agreed, that the new footpath from Watton House entrance to the roundabout looks good.

• Speed cameras

Cllr. Smith said that, as reported at the July meeting, he had video meeting with Ian Richardson from Herts Highways, re the proposal to purchase one speed sign and install two SID sockets, one in Station Road and the other in-between the War Memorial and Rivershill section of the High Street. Highways agreed to visit the village to assess if the sites are suitable and technically within the speed limits before the Parish Council take the matter further. Cllr. Smith said that Ian Richardson agreed to get back to him by the end of July, however he is yet to hear if the inspection has taken place, although he has chased him on the matter several times. Cllr. Crofton agreed to speak to Ian Richardson about this matter when he next sees him.

Action: K. Crofton

e) Parking issues in Rectory Lane

District Cllr. Bell forwarded the following e-mail she received on 2nd August from Geoff Hayden, Corporate Property Services Manager at EHDC.

‘With regard to the request about a change of use of land at Rectory Lane. The Asset Management at East Herts will be happy to consider any requests from the Parish Council.

EHDC appear to own some amenity land left over from the Council's Housing Estate. This land was retained when the Housing Estate was transferred to the Housing association in 2003.

Assuming the land in question is the amenity land I can see from the Mapping system; I believe the Asset Management team could explore a lease or transfer to the Parish Council for the land to be converted to additional off-street parking. This would require a planning permission and some funding.’

f) Trees on the Hockerill slope

Joel Piacentini (EHDC, Enforcement and Inspection Officer), who met with Cllrs. Smith, Dinnin and the Clerk on 27th July had agreed to recommend to EHDC that the footpath on the Hockerill slope is resurfaced to remove the unevenness caused by the roots of the very large Maple trees. he had also agreed to arrange for the height and width of the trees/shrubbery along the Hockerill footpath that runs parallel with Station Road to be cut back. Cllr. Smith said that the Station Roadside had been lightly trimmed.

The Clerk chase Joel Piacentini for an update.

Action: J. Allsop

g) Memorial seats

Cllr. Smith said that the families of John Waring, Andrew Dalrymple, and Prof David Haslam would all like memorial benches in the village.

Cllr. Smith said that two benches could be located on the playing field overlooking the football pitch and at right angles to the ones facing the tennis court, whilst still allowing room for the mower to get past to mow the grass. This position could be used for the John Waring and Andrew Dalrymple seats.

Cllr. McCash agreed to speak to Mrs. Sue Haslam about the location for the Prof Haslam seat. Several sites were suggested including opposite the War Memorial and on Watton Green.

Action: H. McCash

Cllr. Bell said that EHDC have funding available for ‘Hello’ benches, which are a national concept. The idea for these benches is to combat loneliness. If you sit on one of these seats, you are inviting someone else to join you to engage in conversation. She agreed to find out about funding for these benches. **Action: S. Bell**

8. Reports**a) Sub-Committees****Budget & Finance**

Cllr. Block reported on the following items.

- Monthly accounts**

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council		
Petty Cash - Receipts		Petty cash – Payments
None		None
Payments		
Jane Allsop	July salary plus mobile phone allowance	1,045.63
Frank Cooper & Son	Sportsfield grass cutting on 2, 9, 23, 26 July	297.60
Grassroots	War Memorial maintenance – July 2021	48.00
EHDC	Playground inspection	110.28
Rosemary Brown	32 hours litterpick @ £10.00 per hour	320.00
Jane Allsop	August salary + £11 mobile phone	1,045.63
HCC Debtors	copy paper, Velcro dots	41.83
GeoXphere Ltd	Parish online mapping service - annual subs re Neighbourhood plan	180.00
BSWW Parish News	Annual Parish reports – insert	65.00
Frank Cooper & Son	Sportsfield grass cutting on 6, 13, 20, 27 August 2021	297.60
Frank Cooper & Son	Football pitch line marking on	84.00
Grassroots	War Memorial maintenance – August 2021	48.00
Rosemary Brown	32 hours litterpick @ £10.00 per hour	320.00
PKF Littlejohn LLP	Annual external audit for year 2020/2021	360.00
		4,263.57
Receipts		
Nationwide	Interest	17.36
Santander	Interest	0.22
Tennis Club	Donation towards notice board	68.23
Nationwide	Interest	17.36
Santander	Interest	0.22
East Herts Council	Litterpick – annual payment	1553.69
		1657.08

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall		
Petty Cash –		Petty Cash -Payments
Tony Silverstri -	72.00	None
Archery – Main Hall	240.00	
Table Tennis &	250.00	
Floodlighting	146.00	
Painting group –	20.00	
	718.00	
Payments		
British gas	Electricity	56.47
HMRC	VAT return	227.45
East Herts Council	Rates - 2 of 7	53.00
British gas	Gas	22.48
Rosemary Brown	24 hours cleaning @ £10 per hour	240.00
D. P. Electrics	Repair broken outdoor bulkhead light & lamp, supply grill	143.00
HCC debtors	Herts Full Stop - cleaning materials	76.02
British Gas	Electricity	68.52
East Herts Council	Rates - 3 of 7	53.00
Rosemary Brown	22 hours cleaning @ £10 per hour	220.00
		1159.94
Receipts		
Gustav Jahnert	Main Hall & Pavilion hire on 23.07.21	72.00
Santander	Interest	0.09
Talbott Fitness	Use of toilet and changing room facilities	70.00
Ivonne Medina	Pavilion hire and use of field	26.00
Peter Khera - Karate	Main Hall	193.80
Paula Sutton	Main Hall	222.30
McEwan re Lauren	Main Hall & Pavilion on 20th Nov	132.00
Santander	Interest	0.09
Janine Gildersleve	Main Hall	662.62
Claudia Rains	Main Hall & Pavilion - 11th Sept	60.00
Amy Waite	Main Hall & Pavilion on 23rd Oct	75.00
Jessica Wootton	Main Hall & Pavilion - 24th Oct	72.00
HMRC	VAT rebate	3.49
Katherine Scheepers	Main Hall & Pavilion - 2nd Oct	45.00
Holly Wiles	50% deposit for hire on 11th Dec	31.50
Julina Gittins	50% deposit for hire on 13th Nov	22.50
Karen Richardson	Main Hall & Pavilion - 26th Sept	45.00
Carline Paton	Deposit on hirings on 20th Nov + 4th Dec	85.00
Kelly Rothberg	50% deposit for hire on 4th Dec	33.75
Talbott Fitness	Use of toilet and changing room facilities	90.00
		1942.14

- **PKF – Annual audit for year 2020/2021**

Cllr. Block said that the Parish Council has received ‘a clean bill of health’ from the auditors PKF Littlejohn LLP, who have signed off the annual statutory approval of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31st March 2021.

Cllr. Block said that the Parish Council is required to display a notice of conclusion of audit on the Parish Council notice board as well as on the Watton-at-Stone website, together with sections of the completed annual return. The Clerk will arrange to post these notices.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Sports and social hire**

The Clerk said that we need to agree how much to charge the Sports and Social Club for the 1st and 2nd quarters this year. Cllr. Meischke asked the Clerk to send him the Sports and Social Club usage this year so the Trustees can discuss this further and make a recommendation to the Parish Council.

Action: J. Allsop/Trustees

Community Hall Trustees

Cllr. Meischke reported on the following items.

- **Gardening contractor - Grass cutting & maintenance issues**

Cllr. Meischke said that Frank Cooper & Son were awarded the contract to do the work formerly carried out by David Payne. However, this work was not being done and Cllr. Meischke had to chase them to find out why. He said that they had had some staffing issues and were unable to do the work on several occasions due to heavy rain. Last week they brought a team of workers on site and have done all the strimming, clearing, and gardening jobs.

Cllr. Dinnin said that on Saturday she noticed that the cricket nets were all down and grass and nettle cuttings were on the play area. Cllr. Smith said that Frank Cooper & Son were unable to remove some strimming

cuttings from the play area because school was out, and the children had started playing on the equipment. Also, that the cricket nets were already down and when Frank Cooper's team of workers arrived on site and someone else must have tampered with the nets.

Cllr. Smith said that the cricket nets will need to be removed as soon as possible because the hedge is due to be cut this Friday (24th September). Cllr. Dinnin agreed to notify the Cricket Club accordingly.

Action: C. Dinnin

- **Sports field improvement plan**

Grassroots have started work on the new wheelchair/pushchair entrances from church walk onto the sportsfield. Cllr. Meischke said that when this work is complete the next stage of the project will be the installation of the play equipment. He said he was chasing Wicksteed Leisure to provide a revised quotation and a date for the work to commence.

Cllr. Smith said that he has asked Jim Smith to help him submit the car park planning application as this can only be submitted electronically online.

- **Cleaners**

Cllr. Meischke said that our contract cleaner, Hayley Daniels, was not able to work due to illness and the Community Hall has not had a proper clean for over a month. However, they will be back cleaning the hall from Monday 27th September onwards. He said that Rosemary Brown had done a marvellous job cleaning the hall while Hayley Daniels has been away.

- **Deposit from Hirer's & rubbish disposal**

Cllr. Meischke said that the Trustees need to have a meeting to discuss hiring issues, including taking deposits and a possible retainer for one-off evening events. He had been made aware by the 'Village Halls' group that some halls are being trashed by would-be party goers.

This item to be put on the agenda for the next Trustees meeting.

Agenda: Trustees

Cllr. Meischke said that 9 out of 10 hirers are depositing their rubbish in the litterbins outside the hall rather than taking their rubbish home, although they have been told not to do so. The large bin was installed in the car park to help with the litter in the area, however it is now largely full of hirers rubbish.

This item to be put on the agenda for the next Trustees meeting.

Agenda: Trustees

- **Roof leak**

Cllr. Meischke said that Rosemary informed her that there was a leak in the outside toilet ceiling. This turned out to be a problem with the new roof and the installer has now rectified this problem. Whilst on site, the roofing contractors also fitted a piece of capping over a section of the main entrance guttering to see if it alleviates the problem of water missing the guttering and going down the side of the building.

- **Outside toilet lock**

Rosemary Brown informed Cllr. Meischke that she could not open the outside toilets door and he investigated the problem. It turned out the wiring to the timer clock was damaged, probably caused by the roof leak. He has instructed the electricians, D. P. Electrics, to supply and fit a new lock.

- **Showers**

Cllr. Dinnin said that the hot water was not working for cricketers last Sunday. Cllr. Meischke to investigate.

Action: J. Meischke

- **Play area upgrade & improvement grant**

Cllr. Block said he had been looking into grant opportunities for the play area upgrade and has now applied for one from the Community Trust. He said we should know the outcome of this application sometime in October.

- **Accident injury**

Cllr. Hammon said that a child had a bad fall on the concrete edging of the play area, which caused damage to his knee, which required medical intervention. She was told by the parent that the Parish Council had been e-mailed about the incident. The Clerk said that she had not received an e-mail. Cllr. Hammon to give Cllr. Meischke the details of the incident and relevant contact details.

Action: C. Hammon

- **Car Park**

All Parish Councillors have been e-mailed Cllr. Waltham and the NP group's e-mail (dated 20th September) objecting to the car park extension. However, the Parish Council resolved, at its July 2021 Parish Council meeting with a substantial majority, to proceed with the car park extension and apply for planning permission, they cannot take another action on this matter for six months (until January 2022).

- **Play equipment**

Mark Blacktin has repaired the wooden steps on the rainbow multi-play and slide piece of play equipment. However, he has been unable to source 5½ inch round wood to replace the bridge on this piece of equipment. Cllr. Smith asked Cllr. Meischke to give him the details of how long the logs need to be and he will arrange for someone he knows to cut 6-inch logs down to the 5½ inch.

Action: M. Smith

Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee

Cllr. Knight had nothing to report.

Environment Sub-Committee

Cllr. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Allotments**

- **Rent & water charges**

It was agreed that the rent for 2021-2022, currently £30 for a large plot and £15 for a small one, remain the same. Also, that the water charges remain unchanged at £8.80 for a large plot and £4.40 for a small one. The water charges are an unknown as the water meter has not been read and therefore the estimates may be inaccurate. Refer to the item below.

- **Water meter**

Cllr. Meischke said that the Allotment water meter area is full of water and therefore extremely difficult to get access to the meter to read it. It was agreed that a meter reading should be taken at the beginning of November when the allotment water meter is turned off. From then on Castle water should be responsible for annual readings.

Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke

- **Tenancy agreement**

When sending out the annual rent renewals, an e-mail reminder will be sent to allotment holders to sign their new Tenancy agreements, if they have not already done so.

Action: C. Dinnin/J. Allsop

- **General**

Cllr. Dinnin had a meeting with the Allotment Association Committee on the 20th of September. The main points were that they are prepared to keep the rat bait boxes topped up but need to know exactly where they are currently located. Mr. Smith to locate the bait boxes.

Action: M. Smith

There are not enough allotment volunteer helpers to clear empty plots of weeds, etc., but they would be able to clear any rubbish like flowerpots or metal.

The water tank is leaking and adjoining tap is very difficult to use, possibly needs a new tap. Cllr. Smith to inspect and take action as required.

Action: M. Smith

Hover bees are back on four allotments. Cllr. Dinnin asked if she should get Fred Burnell out to deal with them. It was agreed that the bees would soon be gone and not to take any action.

There are two vacant allotments, which are overgrown and currently there is nobody on the waiting list.

Cllr. Dinnin suggested we consider letting any vegetation die down and then put covering on the plots until it is re-let. She said generally, most plots are being well looked after, but there are five problem ones, and she expected a few more plots to come vacant due to ill health and age.

- **Repair to steps & wooden board on the Lammas**

The steps in the wooded walk along the Lammas bank need to be cleared and the wooden plank that was removed needs replacing.

Cllr. McCash said that the church has an odd job man who does work at the churchyard. he is very good at heavy work. She agreed to give his details to Cllr. Dinnin.

Action: H. McCash

Cllr. Bell mentioned that there is a disabled young man in Datchworth who is interested in jobs such as litterpicking.

- **Flooding in the High Street**

Cllr. Jancey asked to raise this item, although it was not on the agenda. The High Street residents who experience flooding outside their High Street properties, which are opposite Watton Place Clinic, don't seem to be able to resolve the problems, which have been going on for more than 15 years.

Cllr. Smith said that when the Lammas recently flooded there was not a flooding problem in the High Street. Also, when a camera was put down the drains, they could find nothing wrong with them, although they were unable to inspect the Mill Lane section of drains. Some work had been required several years ago to sort out the drains around the Methodist Chapel area.

David Smith and Peter Bramley who live in the houses affected with flooding have written to highways but are frustrated that they don't seem to be getting anywhere and asked if the Parish Council could do anything to resolve the problem. Cllr. Crofton said that neither Highways nor Thames water will respond to individuals. He said that he was aware of their correspondence from Mr. Smith and Mr. Bramley.

Cllr. Crofton said that there is a broken drain in Station Road, although he did not know the exact location. The drainage system is very old and not fit for purpose. It has been struggling since Hazeldell was built and since the Gatekeeper meadow development was built it is completely overloaded. Any rainwater coming from the Station Road areas ultimately lands up down in the High Street. Thames Water and Highways don't seem to be able to agree who is responsible for funding the installation of larger drains. Currently there is a stand-off situation with neither party willing to budge.

b) Routine Reports**i) Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests**

Cllrs. Meischke and Block did the emergency escape lighting and manual alarm call tests on Monday 20th September.

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. Dinnin completed the report on 18th to 20th September 2021. A copy of her report will be e-mailed to all Parish Councillors. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Condition of grass:** good wear & tear in goal mouths.

- **Condition of surface:** wear in places, lots of grass cutting etc.

- **Large swings** – wear to seats.

- **Bike ramps – Junior Jump** – graffiti; some of the safety matting is lifting and a trip hazard.

It agreed to inspect the bike ramps, with a view to removing them.

Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke

- **Cricket nets** – refer to 2nd and 3rd paragraph under item 8 a, Community Hall Trustees - Gardening contractor - Grass cutting & maintenance issues.

- **Glebe Court hedge** – Cllr. Dinnin asked the Clerk to contact Clarion Housing, (actioned on 31st August) to ask them to arrange for the overgrown Glebe Court hedge to be cut back. This work is still outstanding. The Clerk to chase. **Action: J. Allsop**

v) Weekly sportsfield-report

Nothing to report.

vi) Weekly defibrillator inspection

Cllr. Dinnin confirmed that the defibrillator was in working order when she inspected it.

Cllr. Hammon continues to do weekly regular checks.

vii) Website/Facebook

None.

viii) Highway issues

Parish Councillors asked Cllr. Crofton if there was anything that could be done with the terrible state of the A602 on the stretch to Frogmore Hall and beyond to Hooks cross. Cllr. Crofton agreed to find out when this road will be repaired.

ix) Dog fouling reports

It was noted that many dog owners are ignoring the sign to keep their dogs on leads on the sportsfield areas.

x) Police reports

All Parish Council have been e-mailed a copy of PCSO Sally Brook's police report dated 21st September.

9. Correspondence received**a) EHDC – Annual playground inspection**

EHDC e-mailed (on the 28th July) the annual playground inspection report for the sportsfield, which was carried-out by the Playground Inspection Company. The Clerk forwarded this document to Cllr. Smith and the Trustees.

This item to be placed on the agenda for the next Community Hall trustees meeting.

Agenda: Trustees

b) E-mail from Anna Pattle – grant proposal for tree planting scheme

All Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of the following e-mail (dated 9th September) from Anna Pattle

“I am writing to you because I read an article in the Parish News about an EHDC grant of £300, which is available to make ideas to help the community, a reality.

I have an idea and would like to test it with the Parish Council and see if they are willing to support.

In short, it is an idea to plant some specimen trees in our Parish and create a Watton walk, which enables visitors and residents follow a route to see a beautiful range of trees.

We already have a great selection but could enhance our village with more. For instance, we could plant Avenues of trees on the approach roads from Datchworth, and Stevenage.

It is partially in response to the pandemic, where our surroundings became so important to us all, and partially to help create wildlife havens. One oak tree can support thousands of insects and animals, providing food and shelter.

And residents who have lost dear ones could sponsor the planting of a tree to commemorate their loved ones.

The school could become involved with selection and planting, thereby engendering care and engagement with their surroundings.

And of course, we can all benefit from the environmental advantages of having more trees to clear our air and reduce pollution.

I will be very happy to take the council through this idea in more detail, if they are interested to find out more.”

Parish Councillors agreed to ask Anna Pattle to provide more concrete ideas and ask her to firm up her suggestions before we take this matter further. Cllr. Smith to inform her accordingly. **Action: M. Smith**

Cllr. Smith said that the Parish Council need to be mindful of the ultimate size of trees planted in the village. An example is the Maple trees planted by EHDC on the Hockerill slope some 40+ years ago. These trees are now too large for the site and are damaging the footpath, but EHDC would not consider removing them as they are in a healthy condition.

c) E-mail from Steve Wood concerning trees overshadowing his property along School Lane

The Clerk received an e-mail from Steve Wood of Rectory Lane, concerning tree branches overhanging School Lane that are blocking light to his greenhouse. The Clerk informed him that the trees concerned were not in the Parish Council’s ownership and suggested that in the first instance he contact HCC. She also told him that he is entitled to cut back any branches that are overhanging his property.

Mr. Wood had a tree removed along this stretch of School Lane, which was causing structural damage to his property, earlier this year via his insurance policy. He had been unable to find out who owned the hedge the tree was growing in.

One of the trees that is currently overshadowing School Lane is also growing out of the hedge and another is growing in the hedge behind the cricket shed on the sportsfield. This section of sportsfield hedge is in the ownership of Glebe House and the adjacent properties and they are responsible, not the Parish Council, for any trees growing in the hedge.

d) E-mail from Steven Keeling re field between Watton House access road & A119/A602 roundabout

Steven Keeling e-mailed on 14th September as follows

“There is a lot of speculation regarding the future of the area used for parking at the end of the fields running down to the road exiting the village after the garden centre.

Can the Parish Council confirm that the area is protected against further development after the road widening scheme has been completed. Is it part of the communal land and therefore part of the village assets.”

Cllr. Smith said that the field Mr. Keeling refers to is owned by the Woodhall Estate. The Neighbourhood Plan will include extra protection from development for this field, which is already in the Green Belt. The field will retain its agricultural usage apart from 12 days a year when it could be used for other purposes, such as a car park for the Church fete. There will be no opportunity to build on this land. Steven Keeling to be e-mailed accordingly. **Action: M. Smith**

Hertfordshire Highways have made a curbed entrance to this field and when Cllr. Smith spoke to the Woodhall Estate about this, they were unaware that this work had been done.

• Memorial Wreath

Cllr. Smith said he had been approached by Janet Carpenter (who lives in Rivershill), who request that she place a poppy wreath on the War Memorial on October 12th. Her uncle died in 1943 when the plane he was in was shot down in Holland. It has recently been recovered and a memorial is due to take place on 12th October in Holland, which due to Covid restrictions, she is unable to attend.

Parish Councillors were in agreement.

10. Village organisations

None.

11. Items for Parish News

None

The meeting closed at 2140.

The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 19th October 2021.