

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 19th October 2021

Present:	Cllr. Michael Smith (Chairman)	Cllr. Stephen Block
	Cllr. Christine Dinnin	Cllr. Kay Jancey
	Cllr. Ian Knight	Cllr. David Stock
	Clerk: Jane Allsop	

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies: Cllrs. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman), Catherine Hammon, Helen McCash, Emma Waltham and District Cllr. Sophie Bell.

2. Public participation

None.

3. Chairman's/ Clerk's report

None.

4. Declaration of interests

None.

5. Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 21st September 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**
This item is outstanding. **Action: C. Hammon**
Cllr. Hammon e-mailed on 18th October as follows.
"We haven't added improving parking at Rectory Lane to the NP benefits yet as we haven't had a meeting since the last PC meeting to discuss it. As you may know, we are still waiting for the environmental report to come through."
2. **Give Cllr. Meischke Sports & Social Club usage for first two quarters of this year:** outstanding. **Action: J. Allsop**
3. **Make a recommendation for Sports & Social Club hire charges for first two quarters of this year**
The Trustees will discuss this subject at its next meeting. **Agenda: Trustees**

c) Action points resolved

1. **Speak to A602 team re Village gateway, dog bin and speed signs**
Cllr. Meischke phoned the A602 team three times & left messages but have had no response. he will try again on return home. **Action: J. Meischke**
2. Speak to Ian Richardson about Speed camera location assessment
3. Chase Joel Piacentini for an update on hedge cutting and footpath repairs
4. Speak to Mrs. Sue Haslam re location of memorial seat – **refer to item 7 d**
5. Find out about funding for 'Hello' benches
6. Put up end-of-audit notices on website and noticeboards
7. **Ask the Cricket Club to removing netting in advance of sportsfield hedge cutting**
Mrs. Dinnin asked if the Parish Council could give the Cricket Club more notice re the removal of their cricket nets before the annual hedge cutting. Next year 10 days to 2 weeks' notice would be much better than the two days' notice they were given this year.
8. **Check showers to see if they are working correctly**
Cllr. Smith said that Cllr. Meischke inspected the showers, but no fault was found. It was possibly a timing issue as the showers are not programmed to come on all day.
9. Give Cllr. Meischke details of accident that occurred on the sportsfield play area
10. Arrange to have half-logs cut down to repair rainbow multi-play and slide equipment
11. Send out Allotment tenancy agreements and rent renewal letters
12. Inspect water tank and adjoining tap on allotments and locate bait boxes
13. **Give details of odd job man to Cllr. Dinnin:** outstanding. **Action: H. McCash**
14. E-mail Parish Councillors a copy Cllr. Dinnin's monthly village-report
15. **Inspect the bike ramps**
Cllrs. Smith and Meischke's recommendation to the Parish Council is that the bike ramps are removed and disposed of. Refer to item 8 b, Routine Reports - Monthly village-report.
16. **Chase Clarion Housing re overgrown hedge at Glebe Court:** outstanding.
The Clerk to chase again. **Action: J. Allsop**

17. Ask Anna Pattle to provide more concrete ideas about her tree planting plan
18. E-mail Steven Keeling re land adjacent to the A602

6. Planning

a) Applications

The following planning application was dealt with via e-mail.

i) 31 Station Road (3/21/2426/HH)

Single Storey rear extension

The Parish Council agreed a no comment responses to this application.

Action: J. Allsop

b) Decisions

i) 27 Hazeldell (3/21/2075/HH)

Single storey rear extension

- EHDC permission granted

The following planning decision was received after the agenda was published.

• 2 Rectory Lane (3/21/1454/HH)

Retention of single storey rear extension

- EHDC permission granted

7. Reports

a) Report from District Councillor Sophie Bell

District Cllr. Sophie Bell-was not present at the meeting

• Village litterpicking/ litterbin collection

Cllr. Smith e-mailed Cllr. Bell (on 18th October) as follows.

‘You are probably aware that our litter bins are regularly spilling over because we are not getting regular collections, a service we pay for. Could you suggest that maybe the Parish Council arranges collection and EHDC picks up a bulk bin from a central point to be agreed.

I need to know what the charge might be for collection of that bin so that we can start to evaluate such an arrangement.’

The Clerk said that Watton-at-Stone is unusual in that EHDC arranges for its litterpicking and bin emptying. All other villages in EHDC employ a litterpick person to do the work and EHDC collect the rubbish from a central bin and pay the village to do this work. Watton-at-Stone had a problem with getting anyone reliable to do the work, as well as a problem with the litterpick bin, which was kept in the Community Hall and got tipped over regularly by youths. EHDC agreed to do the work for us and now only pay for 4 out of the 8 hours of litterpicking work that Rosemary does in and around the Community Hall and sportsfield area.

Cllr. Smith said that it was time that the Parish Council consider getting contractors to remove the rubbish and empty the bins on a regular basis and place the rubbish in a large bin for collection by EHDC contractors. He said that because the bins are not being emptied on a regular basis, three of the post mounted lidded bins have been damaged. The sheer weight of rubbish causes the bins to break when they are hinged forward to remove the litter filled bin bags. So far, he and Cllr. Meischke have managed to repair the bins.

The Clerk to ask Glasdon if they can provide bin outers only rather than having to pay for a completely new bin.

Action: J. Allsop

b) Neighbourhood plan and benefits

Cllr. Waltham e-mailed on 18th October.

‘The Environment Agency missed the consultation deadline for commenting on the scoping report but responded last week.

The NP are now expecting the draft SEA by this coming Friday and will then review next steps.’

c) Trimming back of trees and hedging along Hockerill footpath that runs parallel with Station Road

Work outstanding. This item to remain on the agenda until this matter has been resolved. **Agenda: 11/2021**

d) Memorial seats

Cllr. McCash e-mailed on 18th October, reporting that she had spoken to Susan Haslam, who is very happy for there to be a memorial bench in Watton for her husband Prof. David Haslam and will leave the positioning to the Parish Council.

Cllr. Smith to speak to Cllr. McCash to ask her to clarify with Mrs. Haslam certain aspects of the purchase and location of her husband’s memorial seat (i.e., areas she would not wish to have the seat located and contribution to the purchase of the seat).

Action: M. Smith

Cllr. Bell e-mailed information available from the EHDC website re guidance on benches, plaques and memorial trees. Also links to initiatives on Talking Benches and tackling isolation and loneliness.

She did not provide any information on funding available for the ‘Hello’ benches.

e) Speed sign for the southern end of the village

Cllr. Smith said that County Cllr. Ken Crofton had spoken to Ian Richardson (Herts Highways) to chase the agreed site visit to assess if the sites identified by the Parish Council for speed signs are suitable.

A teams meeting has now been arranged for Tuesday 26th October with Ian Hollinrake (Lead Assistant

Highway Manager, East Herts District). This item to remain on the agenda.

Agenda: 11/2021

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
4 Allotment holders - rent and water	99.00	None
	99.00	
Payments		
Bidwells	Glebe rent - Sportsfield extension	125.00
Wages and salaries	September 2021	1,365.83
HMRC	Tax & NI	252.86
Community Hall Council	Half year grant	3,165.00
Frank Cooper & Son	Perimeter grass cutting, weeding and pruning	492.00
Frank Cooper & Son	Sportsfield grass cutting on 9, 24 September 2021	148.80
Frank Cooper & Son	Football pitch line marking on 8th, 15th, 24th September	126.00
Grassroots	War Memorial maintenance – September 2021	48.00
Defib Store	Adult G5 pads	61.20
BT	Phone line and call charges - July to September 2021	69.66
		5,854.35
Receipts		
East Herts Council	2 nd precept payment	18,582.50
Nationwide	Interest	16.80
Santander	Interest	0.21
Sports and Social Club	Donation towards football pitch marking	175.00
27 Allotment holders	Allotment rent and water charges for 2021/2022	1,039.40
Groundwork Trust	Neighbourhood Plan Grant	7,050.00
		26,863.91
Watton-at-Stone Community Hall		
Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments
Tony Silverstri - Pavilion	48.00	Amazon – 2 x 2022 A5 diaries
Archery – Main Hall	120.00	
Floodlighting donations from 15.09 to	91.00	
Painting group – meet room – 4 weeks	40.00	
	299.00	
Payments		
British gas	Gas	18.40
McEwan re Lauren Holt	REFUND - booking cancelled for 20th Nov	132.00
British Gas	Electricity	84.70
HMRC	VAT return - August 2021	173.00
Wages	September 2021	230.00
BHIB Ltd	Trustees' indemnity insurance	388.09
East Herts Council	Rates - 4 of 7	53.00
British Gas	Gas	21.44
		1100.63
Receipts		
Talbott Fitness	Use of toilet and changing room facilities	90.00
Karla Reed-Peck	Pavilion on 10th October	28.00
Elisha Majer	50% deposit for hire on 30th October	45.00
Claire Lale	50% deposit for hire on 12th December	36.00
Codie Page	50% deposit for hire on 5th December	37.50
Santander	bank interest	0.08
Karla Reed-Peck	Main Hall 10th October	32.00
Chloe Jones	Main Hall & Pavilion - 9th October	60.00
Emma Hanlon	50% deposit for hire on 13 th November	26.25
Chloe Hamilton	Main Hall & Pavilion - 31st October	75.00
Jo Jamieson	Main Hall & Pavilion - 17th October	45.00
Watton-at-Stone Parish	½ year grant	3,165.00
Jo Joel	Main Hall 10th October	60.00
Claire Whitby	Main Hall & Pavilion - 14th November	45.00
Kirsty Stacey	50% deposit for hire on 19th December	36.00
Amy Waite	Extra hour on booking for 23 rd October	15.00
		3,795.83

Parish Councillors approved the payments.

- **6-monthly statement of accounts for the Parish Council and Community Hall**
Cllr. Block reported that at the halfway point through the financial year the Parish Council is running roughly in line with the budget.

The Community Hall has shown a healthy bounce back in bookings in recent months and is now running under budget.

There is also overdue money from the Sports and Social club to be accounted for.

- **6-monthly inspection of accounts**
Cllr. McCash carried-out the six-month inspection of the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts on 15th October and they were in good order.
- **Request for Budget items for 2022/2023**
Cllr. Block reminded Parish Councillors to give the Clerk their budget items for 2022/23 as soon as possible.

Action: Parish Councillors

He said that he and the Clerk hope to put the draft budget together in the next few weeks and then he would arrange a meeting of the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee towards the end of November.

- **Trustees' indemnity insurance cover**
Cllr. Block reported that the Trustees' Indemnity Insurance Cover is up for renewal on 20th October at a cost of £388.09 an increase of £9.09 compared to last year. Parish Councillors approved this payment.

Community Hall Trustees

In Cllr. Meischke absence, Cllr. Smith reported on the following items.

- **Outside Toilets**
Vandals lifted one of the internal doors in the external toilets off their hinges and wedged them in the openings. Cllr. Smith managed to rehang them and reinstated the soap dispenser they had ripped off the wall. Apart from incidents of vandalism, the external toilets have kept well.
Cllr. McCash, in her e-mail of 18th October, confirmed that she had reported the vandalism to the police.
Cllr. Dinnin suggested that the Parish Council should think about finding an odd job man who could be on call to fix any problems, instead of relying on Cllrs. Meischke or Smith all the time.
Cllr. Stock suggested that the subject of a caretaker plus vandalism be on the agenda for the next Trustees meeting. This was agreed. **Agenda: Trustees**
- **Play Area updates**
 - **Repairs**
Cllr. Smith said that he had arranged for the new timber, required to repair the wooden steps on the rainbow multi-play and slide play equipment, cut to size and treated. He will arrange to replace the wooden steps in the next week or two. **Action: M. Smith**
 - **New entrance onto sportsfield**
Cllr. Smith said that the new entrance onto the sportsfield is good but as it has a steep incline a handrail needs installing. He agreed to investigate the options. **Action: M. Smith**
Cllr. Knight said that the old footpath to the tennis courts is a trip hazard because the paving stones have been removed and the ground not levelled. Cllr. Smith to take action as required. **Action: M. Smith**
 - **Play equipment**
Cllr. Smith said that because of problems in obtaining materials due to Covid and Brexit the play area scheme will not be installed until January 2022 at the earliest.
 - **Play area improvement grant**
Cllr. Block was pleased to announce that he had been successful in obtaining a £2,000 grant towards the play area improvements from Stevenage Community Trust. He also applied to BIFFA, but having studied the criteria, the Community Hall was not eligible because it does not have an agreement with the Parish Council re the land the Community Hall, play area and tennis courts stand on. The Parish Council would not have been eligible to apply for a grant.
Cllr. Block said that EHDC have some grant options coming up soon and it may be possible to obtain some more funding from them for the play area improvements.
 - **Car Park**
Hertfordshire Planning are looking into submitting a planning application for the Community Hall car park extension. They will survey the site to see that it is suitable and then talk to the EHDC planners before an application is submitted.
 - **Use of mobile floodlights by Rotary for Ware Fire Works**
Ware Rotary Club would like to borrow the portable floodlights again this year for their fireworks party in November. This was agreed by Parish Councillors present at the meeting. Ware Rotary Club will be responsible for any damaged caused to the units. Mr. Meischke to notify them accordingly. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Arrange date for Trustees meeting**
Cllr. Meischke to arrange Trustees meeting date. **Action: J. Meischke**

Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee

Cllr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **Tennis courts surfaces**

Cllr. Knight said that at the March 2021 meeting it was decided that the double tennis courts (Court A) should be resurfaced within two-years and a target of spring /summer 2022 seemed sensible. The estimated cost of the work was expected to be around £21,000.

Cllr. Knight said that estimates should now be sort and recommended that the work take place during August 2022, when there is least disruption to the Tennis Club. It was agreed to obtain 3 estimates.

Action: I. Knight

Cllr. Smith said that the Hartham tennis courts have a carpet type surface and wondered if this might be a good alternative. Cllr. Knight agreed to investigate this option too.

Action: I. Knight

- **Budget items**

Cllr. Knight said he would also be obtaining pricing for 2022/2023 budget purposes the following.

- Pressure washing and moss killing court B.
- 2 sets of boot brushes.

The Clerk confirmed that the 2021/2022 budget already included the purchase of 2 sets of boot brushes.

It was agreed that these should now be ordered as the current brushes are in very poor condition.

Action: J. Allsop

Environment Sub-Committee

Cllr. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Allotments**

The Clerk has sent out rent renewals for 2021-2022 along with a reminder for tenants who have yet to sign their copy of the new Tenancy Agreement to do so and return it to the Clerk.

There are still 11 out of 48 people who still need to pay and 7 who need to return their signed Tenancy Agreements.

Currently there are four vacant plots and two people on the waiting list. Cllr. Dinnin to show the prospective allotment holders the vacant plots.

Action: C. Dinnin

Cllr. Dinnin said that the allotment entrance is overgrown. One side of the allotment entrance is the responsibility of Glebe Court, and the other side is the Parish Council's and two of the High Street properties. She agreed to ask Adam Welch to cut back the section the Parish Council are responsible for and ask the owners of the High Street properties if they would like us to do the work and invoice them accordingly.

Action: C. Dinnin

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

At the September Parish Council meeting, Cllr. McCash suggested that the odd job man who does work at the churchyard might be interested in repairing the Lammas steps. She agreed to give Cllr. Dinnin his contact details but has not done so yet.

Action: H. McCash

- **Grass cutting required on the Lammas, Watton Green and allotments**

Cllr. Smith will get in contact with Jeff Skidmore to arrange the grass cutting works.

Action: M. Smith

b) Routine Reports

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

Cllr. Meischke will do the emergency escape lighting and manual alarm call tests on his return from holiday.

Action: J. Meischke

Cllr. Meischke continues to inspect the hall regularly including running the water every 2-3 weeks 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. Jancey completed the report on 13th October 2021.

All Parish Councillors have been e-mailed a copy of her report.

- **Condition of surface:** lifting by Supernova.
- **Large swings** – wear to surface, seat damage, bird droppings on one seat.
- **Small swings** – swing barrier rubber perishing.
- **Rainbow** multi-play and slide – wooden steps rotting.

Inspect items raised above and take action if required.

Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke

- **Crazy daisy:** Top missing.

This has been missing for some time, no action required.

- **Junior Climbing frame** - Dips in surface.
This problem will be resolved when the play area upgrades are made.
Cllr. Jancey reported that the Playground area is looking very tired.

- **Bike ramps**

- **Junior jump** - edge of matting lifting.
- **Fun box** - matting exposed and a big dip.

Parish Councillors agreed that both Bike ramps and their surrounding matting are removed, and the area reseeded when the play area upgrades take place. Wicksteed Leisure to be asked to dispose of the bike ramps with the other equipment they will be removing from site. **Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke**

Cllr. Smith said that most of the play area problems highlighted above will be resolved when the play area improvement work is done in early 2022.

- **Community Hall**

- **External condition** - Toilet door and storeroom door need painting.

This item to be discussed at the next meeting of the trustees.

Agenda: Trustees

- **Tennis courts** - Fence between courts A and B not secured to posts in places.

Cllr. Smith said the problem with the fence occurs because people using the court bounce against the fencing.

- **Allotment**

- **Entrance** - Overgrown on both sides.

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

- **Condition of paths between Allotments** - Some overgrown, particularly down the middle path.

- **Recycling clothes bin** - Ok, some fly tipping next to it. Padded headboards from bed.

The clothes bin is on Woodhall Estate land.

- **Salt bin, High Elms Lane** - Half full, big pool of water inside and difficult to access as surrounded by nettles.

After the salt bins get filled by Hertfordshire Highways, Cllr. Smith will inspect the bin up at High Elms Lane to see if Highways have cut back the nettles and filled the bin with salt.

Action: M. Smith

- **Dog waste bins** - Footpath 17 bin - lid missing. Walkern Road bin - leaning.

High Street bin by War Memorial - cracked. Great Innings bin - some graffiti.

v) **6-month report**

Cllrs. Block and Jancey completed the report on 13th October 2021.

All Parish Councillors have been e-mailed a copy of their report.

- **Tennis Courts:** some cracks in hard surface.

- **Tennis nets** - small hole (court A).

- **Wire fence** - loose between courts A and B.

Cllr. Smith and Meischke to inspect.

Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke

- **Play area** - refer to monthly village-report.

- **Community Hall**

- **Pavilion** - Damage to some tables.

- **Main Hall**

- **Benches** - one small tear? already glued.

- **Floor markings** – worn.

- **External toilet** - light pulls very dirty. need replacing.

- **Internal toilet** - light pulls very dirty need replacing. Hot tap in Ladies toilet stays on for extended time.

Cllr. Jancey said that she has worked out that 7 metres of cord is required to replace all the light pulls.

The Clerk to purchase the cord.

Action: J. Allsop

- **First aid box** - many items need replacing as they have expired.

Cllr. Jancey will determine which first aid refill kit needs to be purchased and seek the Trustees approval prior to purchase.

Action: K. Jancey

- **Benches** – several of the benches need cleaning and others are in poor condition or need painting.

- High Street/Great Innings roundabout - Needs cleaning.

- High Street North near bus stop - starting to rot.

- High Street near Mill Lane - needs painting.

- Station Road opposite junction with Rectory Lane - needs painting.

- High Street South adjacent to the Ornate Village sign - some rot needs painting.

- Station Road just after car park entrance to Watton Place Clinic - some graffiti.

- Sportsfield benches:
 - Harry's bench - missing slat.
 - Bench by swings - in poor condition.
 - Bench by pull up bars - rotting.
 - Bench by Supernova - surrounded by nettles.

Cllr. Smith said the plan is to get rid of the two benches in poor condition on the sportsfield when the play area is upgraded. It was agreed to remove the High Street North bench near the notice board.

Cllr. Smith to arrange for its removal.

Action: M. Smith

The Trustees to discuss the 6-month report at their next meeting.

Agenda: Trustees.

vi) **Weekly sportsfield-report**

Nothing to report.

vii) **Weekly defibrillator inspection**

Cllr. Hammon continues to do weekly regular checks. On 1st October she noted that a red light was showing and e-mailed Cllr. Meischke accordingly. Cllr. Meischke replied that the defibrillator pads went out of date on 30th September and a new set were on order. However, the defibrillator machine would still work despite this warning. The new pads have been delivered and will be installed soon. This should reset the defibrillator light back to green.

Action: J. Meischke

During her inspection on 13th October, Cllr. Jancey also noted the defibrillator was showing a red light.

viii) **Website/Facebook**

None.

ix) **Highway issues**

Cllr. Crofton e-mailed on 3rd October as follows.

‘As advised at the PC meeting, I have raised the issue regarding the poor road surface at Hooks Cross on A602 with Highways officers.

I am pleased to say this was well & truly on their radar and planned for a serious resurfacing sectional repair under the integrated works programme. The only delay is in acquiring the materials where it appears there is a shortage.’

x) **Dog fouling reports**

Cllr. Smith said that the man in Glebe Close continues to keep the dog bag dispenser filled and it appears to be in good use and there is little evidence of dog fouling in this area.

xi) **Police reports**

PCSO Sally Brooks has not provided her police report this month because she is off work due to illness but expects to be back to work in the next week.

9. Correspondence received

a) **Onsite First Aid Training Company**

Cllr. Jancey has received numerous phone calls from Onsite First Aid Training Company about running another course in the village. They also contacted the Clerk and suggested that they give us some pricing so that Parish Councillors could discuss if they were interested or not. They have quoted £699 for 30 delegates. The cost in October 2019 was £389 plus VAT for a maximum of 12 delegates.

Cllr. Jancey obtained the following quotations in July 2019

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| • St John Ambulance | up to 30 delegates | £2134 + VAT |
| • British Red Cross | held at their premises 6 – 15, covers AED's | £719 + VAT |
| • Onsite First Aid | up to 12 delegates responding to incidents with an AED | £389 + VAT |

Cllr. Jancey said that, in her opinion, there should be a maximum of 12-15 delegates to allow everyone to do the resuscitation dummy exercises. She said that 30 people doing this in our hall would not give everyone enough room or for the instructor to give attention to everyone attending. Parish Councillors were in agreement.

After discussion, it was agreed that a notice should be placed on Facebook to gauge the interest in running a first aid course.

Action: K. Jancey/J. Allsop

10. Village organisations

None.

11. Items for Parish News

None.

The meeting closed at 21:00.

The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 16th November 2021.