

## Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2022

<b>Present:</b>	Cllr. Michael Smith (Chairman)	Cllr. Christine Dinnin
	Cllr. Steve Block	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

Apologies: Cllr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman)

### 2. Public participation

None.

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

Additional item concerning lighting of the path connecting the high street to Rivershill

### 4. Declaration of interests

Cllrs. McCash declared a pecuniary interest in item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee – Annual audits (Immediate Family).

### 5. Minutes of the last meeting.

#### a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2022**  
Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved and signed.

#### b) Review of actions

1. **Arrange for the Community Hall accounts to be submitted to McCash & Hay for auditing**  
This item is outstanding. **Action: J. Allsop**

#### c) Action points resolved

1. Reply to Mr. Sell's letter re Parish Council land adjacent to his property
2. Obtain quotations for first aid courses
3. Place notice on Facebook re First Aid course
4. Arrange for the Parish Council accounts to be submitted to Stuart McCash for auditing
5. Contact Business Utility Renewals re water prices
6. Place Caretaker advert on a notice on the Facebook, website, notice boards & in the Parish News
7. E-mail Cllr. Meischke re Queen's platinum celebrations expenditures
8. Find out how Watton school intend to help with the Queen's platinum celebrations in the village
9. Instruct Frank Cooper & Son to cut the perimeter of the sportsfield and clear around the tennis courts
10. Submit articles to be included in the April edition of the Parish News

### 6. Planning

#### a) Applications

None.

#### b) Decisions

##### i) **Land adjacent to Gregorys Farm – (3/21/0150/FUL)**

Construction of agricultural barn, with associated access road and hardstanding areas.

- EHDC – permission granted

The following planning decisions were received after the agenda was published.

##### • **20 High Street (3/21/0212/LBC)**

Hip to gable roof with insertion of two dormer windows to front and repositioning of dormer to rear.

Single storey infill extension to front. Replacement single storey rear extension and alterations to fenestration with insertion of window to side elevation

- EHDC permission refused

##### • **Gregorys Barn, Gregorys Farm, Dane End – (Listed Building)**

Change of use of 2 attached barns to 1 residential dwelling. Single storey frameless glass extension. New ground floor, first floor and roof window openings and blocking up of existing openings. External alterations with stained black softwood featheredge boarding and white render finish to brickwork. New patio and fence. Internal alterations to install stairs and create first floor accommodation, remove internal walls, create new openings, and install new internal walls

- EHDC – permission granted

##### • **Blue Hill Villa, Walkern Road (3/21/2828/FUL)**

Single storey side extension

- EHDC – permission granted

## 7. Specific items

### a) Neighbourhood plan and benefits

Cllr. Waltham provided the following report.

The Regulation 14 (Pre-submission) Consultation finished on 6 March. The NP team is now reviewing the resident comments and our planning consultant will review the statutory responses. This is taking some time due to the volume of responses. The Steering Group is working towards completing the review of the comments before the NP meeting on 26 April. The consultant is currently very busy, and it may take longer to receive her advice on the statutory responses. EW has asked her to give an indication of when this work will be undertaken.

There were over 100 resident comments covering all aspects of the Plan. The main causes of concern are the impact of the housing and sport development on traffic and parking, particularly along Walkern Road, Great Innings and Mill Lane/High Street.

Once all comments have been reviewed the NP steering group will recommend any required changes to the Neighbourhood Plan. Once these are undertaken, then the Plan will be submitted to EHDC for the Regulation 15 consultation. It is expected this will take place in summer 2022. EHDC will co-ordinate the Regulation 15 public consultation, which be followed by a review of the Plan and consultation comments by a Planning Inspector.

Cllr. Smith said that Charles Clark picked up on a locality grant and was successful in his securing £14,900 for the Parish Council to put towards the Mill Lane Youth Football project. The grant has now been paid directly into the Parish Council's deposit account by Groundwork Trust.

Cllr. Smith to send Charles Clark a letter of thanks.

**Action: M. Smith**

### b) Hockerill footpath behind the George and Dragon public house

Cllr. Smith said there was no progress to report on this item.

This item to remain on the agenda until resolved.

**Agenda: 05/2022**

### c) Work required to HCC owned hedge that runs along the Grey House boundary

Cllr. Smith said that, as reported at the March meeting, he had spoken to Cllr. Crofton concerning removal of the cuttings left by a member of public who cut back the overhanging shrubbery along the Grey House boundary. These cuttings have now been removed.

### d) Speed signs

Cllr. Smith said that he is still waiting to hear the result of our application for funding towards speed signs for the village.

### e) Parish Council land adjacent to Beane Cottage

Cllr. Smith said that Mr. Sell has taken up the offer of paying an annual rent and agreed to pay £400 per annum for the use of the Parish Council land adjacent to his property. The current agreement would need to be amended to include the £400 annual rental. This was agreed by Parish Councillors.

Cllr. Smith to act accordingly.

**Action: M. Smith**

### f) First aid course

Cllr. Jancey reported that she had e-mailed County Cllr. Ken Crofton and District Cllr. Sophie Bell as suggested.

Cllr. Bell said "I've e-mailed East Herts council to ask if they know of any training companies. Failing that, I've asked if there are any grants, we could apply for that would cover the extra."

She has asked Cllr. Bell for an update.

Cllr. Crofton e-mailed Robert Murray (Project Officer, Programme Management & Project Delivery Team, Public Health, HCC. He suggested St. John's Ambulance, however at £144 per person this is not an option.

Cllr. Jancey also e-mailed London Heart who do not offer training but may have preferred providers. She is awaiting a response.

Someone called Zoe contacted us via Facebook offering to obtain a quotation from the company she works for (Staff Skills training). As she did not get back to us, Cllr. Jancey said she had e-mailed them direct asking for a quote and is now awaiting a response.

### • Footpath running from the Bull car park to Rivershill

Cllr. Smith said that Cllr. Meischke is concerned that the footpath running from the Bull car park to Rivershill is something of a hazard during the hours of darkness. He has identified suitable self-charging lights for £30 and would like to purchase them. Parish Councillors agreed to the purchase. **Action: J. Meischke**

The Clerk reminded Parish Councillors of the history of this footpath, which has no registered owner. Over 30 years ago the Parish Council requested that this footpath be included on the rights of way map. HCC at that time said we would be put on a waiting list, however over time as more urgent requests come forward, we have gone lower and lower down the list. The current status is unknown.

## 8. Reports

### a) Sub-Committees

#### Budget & Finance

Cllr. Block reported on the following items.

- **Monthly accounts**

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council		
Petty Cash –		Petty cash - Payments
None		None
<b>Payments</b>		
Bidwells	Sportsfield extension	125.00
Jane Allsop	March salary + £11 mobile phone + back pay to April 2021	1,190.78
Jane Allsop	Phone calls - January & February 2022	46.48
HMRC	Tax & NI - January to March 2022	322.10
Castle Water	Water supply	147.39
Rosemary Brown	32 hours litterpick @ £10.00 per hour	320.00
Ivonne Hannaway	Return of allotment deposit	50.00
Jane Allsop	Phone calls - March 2022	23.21
Govresources Ltd	Neighbourhood Plan - consultation work	2,400.00
Adam Welch	£150 leaf pick £80 cut Walkern road laurel hedge	230.00
Grassroots	Installation of railings and re-siting of wastebin on sportsfield	880.86
Tornado Event hire	Stage hire for Platinum Jubilee celebration	100.00
J. Allsop	Microsoft 365	59.99
Amazon	100 laminating pouches and 2 laser printer cartridges	38.28
Frank Cooper &	Grass cutting on 24.03.22	78.00
Frank Cooper &	Strimming, mowing and clearance work	162.00
		<b>6,174.09</b>
<b>Receipts</b>		
Nationwide	Interest	27.82
Santander	Interest	0.05
		<b>27.87</b>
Watton-at-Stone Community Hall		
Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments
Archery – Main Hall	128.00	
Bowls – Main Hall	96.00	
Table Tennis – Main Hall	108.00	
Floodlighting donations	312.00	
Tony Silverstri – Pavilion	69.00	
Youth Football – Main Hall	52.00	
	<b>765.00</b>	
<b>Payments</b>		
T G Shutlar	repair to guttering	84.00
Rosemary Brown	29.5 hours cleaning @ £10 per hour	295.00
HCC	Cleaning materials – invoice £34.18 - £8.78 already paid	25.40
HCC	Cleaning materials	82.86
		<b>487.26</b>
<b>Receipts</b>		
Kate Kasapoglu	2nd payment for hire on 19th March	30.00
Jo Jamieson Da	1st 50% deposit for hire - 14th May	33.25
Katherine Roberts-	2nd payment for hire on 20th March	37.50
Tim & Victoria	1st 50% deposit for hire - 14th May	47.50
Laura Thurgood	2nd payment for hire - 26th March	45.00
Rachael Lawrence	Main Hall & Pavilion -8th May (25% discount)	49.87
Ildiko	Meeting room - Jan - June 2022	144.00
Watton House	Meeting room	12.00
HMRC	VAT	119.26
Santander	Bank interest	0.09
Prasheela Vara	2nd payment for hire - 9th April	38.00
Gustav Jahnert	1st 50% deposit for hire - 2nd May	44.00
Justin Boddy	Pavilion hire	45.00
Justin Boddy	Pavilion hire	9.00
		<b>654.47</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 2022**

These were e-mailed to Parish Councillors on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

The Parish Council accounts show that, if the cost of the work to the playground is stripped out being funded via New Homes Bonus, it performed roughly in line with the budget.

The Community Hall accounts show that it performed better than budget through a combination of lower overheads and better income than expected.

- **Annual Audits**

- **Parish Council internal audit**

On 11<sup>th</sup> April, the Clerk deposited the Parish Council accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 with Stuart McCash for the internal audit.

- **Community Hall audit**

The Clerk said she would be submitting the Community Hall accounts for the year end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 to McCash and Hay for auditing within the next week. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **PKF Littlejohn – external audit papers for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022**

PKF Littlejohn e-mailed, on 24<sup>th</sup> March, informing us of the details for the annual audit for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. The completed Annual Return and all relevant documentation needs to be submitted to them by 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022. The Parish Council have not been selected as part of the 5% sample subject to intermediate review.

- **Annual review of documents**

- **Review Asset registers**

The asset register has been updated and copies e-mailed to all Parish Councillors. The main changes were play equipment and benches.

- **Long term capital expenditures**

This item to be discussed at the June Parish Council meeting. **Agenda: 06/2022**

- **Microsoft software – annual renewal**

The Microsoft 365 software on the Parish Council's Dell laptop automatically renewed at the beginning of April at a cost of £59.99.

- **Annual insurance**

BHIB have today sent their insurance renewal papers for 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022. Cllr. Block said, the cost of cover has gone up to £1,555.24 (including premium tax at 12%). The cost last year was £1,406.28, which was subject to a 3-year long-term undertaking which is now ended. BHIB say the increase reflects the rising cost of claims because of increases in such areas as construction costs and liability settlements, particularly where injuries to third parties are concerned.

Cllr. Block agreed to look at alternative insurance providers. **Action: S. Block**

## Community Hall Trustees

In the absence of Cllr. Meischke, Cllr. Stock reported on the following items.

- **Caretaker**

To date, three interested parties have requested details on the caretaker position.

The deadline date for applications is Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

- **Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations**

Cllr. Stock said that the Parish Council's plans for the celebrations on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June are going well.

Cllr. Meischke was contacted by the owner of four miniature ponies which are kept in the Horses Field adjacent to the sportsfield. She is concerned that the planned fireworks display could frighten her animals.

Cllr. Smith has visited Denis Filer and his daughter, who have both agreed that the ponies can be kept at their facilities at Watton Green during the proposed fireworks display. The owner of the ponies is going to visit the Filer's to see if she is happy with the arrangement.

The original and provisional rough-estimate for the firework display was £2500 but has now been confirmed to be £3000 plus VAT. Parish Councillors approved this expenditure and understood the reasons for the increase.

We need to make a decision about the use of the Kitchen for the day and it was suggested that we could offer it to the Youth Football Club, e.g., so they could raise funds for their club by selling hot and cold drinks, crisps and sweets, etc. This was agreed in principle by Parish Councillors, and Cllr. Smith is to contact the Youth Football Club to see if they are interested and if so, establish what they would like to sell and the type of supervision that would be in place. **Action: M. Smith**

- **Fitting of two handrails for the new entrance onto the sportsfield**  
The two handrails have been installed (by Grassroots) at the new entrance to the sportsfield. A new litter bin is now to be fitted to the play area-side handrail. **Action: S. Block/J. Meischke**
- **Repair of high-level window winder mechanism**  
This is to be done by M K Windows (the contractor who repaired the other side of the high-level windows in late 2016) on 28<sup>th</sup> April.
- **New Bins install**  
The litterbin on the corner of School Lane, opposite Crumbs, has been smashed. Although it was suggested to have been done by vandals, it could have been equally well damaged by a car hitting it. Parish Councillors agreed to replace the bin. **Action: J. Allsop**  
To help to alleviate the litter problem in this area, Cllr. Smith said he would speak to the new owners of the village shop to see if they would be prepared to provide a large bin on their property. **Action: M. Smith**
- **Toilet lighting**  
Cllr. Meischke is going to investigate the costs involved to have the lights (in the internal and external toilets) controlled by motion sensors. This will avoid the cost of wasted energy due to hirers regularly leaving the lights on and thus the fans running. It was agreed that this was a sensible idea. **Action: J. Meischke**

### Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee

Cllr. Knight did not have anything to report.

### Environment Sub-Committee

Cllr. Dinnin reported on the following items

- **Lammas**  
The Lammas is looking lovely.
- **Allotments**  
The allotments are looking good except for five plots that look neglected. Cllr. Dinnin said she had e-mailed the five allotment holders asking them if they wish to continue with their plots as we currently have a waiting list.  
Cllr. Jancey said that the Allotment and Garden Association are holding their AGM in the Community Hall on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> April.
- **Watton Green**  
Cllr. Smith said that there are a few tree branches that need removing on Watton Green. Cllr. Dinnin to ask Adam Welch to inspect the trees and quote for any work required. **Action: C. Dinnin**
- **Mill site**  
Cllr. Smith said that he had been talking to the people working on the Mill building and the owners are keen to have the River Beane Weir notched. The previous owner had not been willing to have this work done, which is why the upgrades, including installing baffles, along the Lammas stretch of the river Beane was halted.  
Cllr. Smith said that he had contacted Tim Hill Middlesex and Wildlife Trust, but he has not yet got back to him. He said that as this project was halted so many years ago, they may not be willing to pick up on it again.  
Cllr. Knight said that one of the plans in the original project was to put a gully in to feed into the Mill Pond at times of flood.  
The Mill owner intends to remove the low brick wall in front of their building and form a footpath.  
Cllr. Smith said that he believes there is enough room to install a pedestrian footbridge over the river Beane to connect with the existing footpath on the High Street side of Mill Lane.

### b) Routine Reports

- i) **Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests**  
Cllr. Meischke continues to carry-out the emergency escape lighting and manual alarm call tests on a monthly basis. He also 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. Waltham completed the report on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2022. All Parish Councillors to be e-mailed a copy of this report.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Litter** – some particularly near bench near horses’ field at top end.  
**Litterbin** – bin by teenage shelter broken. Cllr. Smith said he had now repaired this bin.
- **Mill Lane** – rubbish piled up by bin  
**War Memorial** – good but some weed among the gravel stones. Cllr. McCash said that Grassroots were down on site this morning.
- **Millennium walk** - through woods behind Rivershill restored and in great shape.  
Cllr. Waltham said the broken rails had been replaced. Cllr. Dinnin said she did not know if this work had been done via Tony Bradford with the CMS teams or if the Woodhall estate had done this work.  
Cllr. Hammon also reported a tree down over the river. Cllrs. Smith and Dinnin agreed to investigate.

**Action: C. Dinnin/ M. Smith**

**vi) Weekly sportsfield-report**

Nothing to report.

**vii) Weekly defibrillator inspection**

Nothing to report.

**viii) Website/Facebook**

None.

**ix) Highway issues**

None.

**x) Dog fouling reports**

None.

**xi) Police reports**

All Parish Councillors have been e-mailed PCSO Sally Brook’s police report of 19<sup>th</sup> April.

**9. Correspondence received**

None.

**10. Village organisations**

- **Parish Church of St Andrew and St Mary**

Cllr. McCash reported that the Parish Church will be holding a Platinum Jubilee ‘Songs of Praise’ service on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June at 1000.

**11. Items for Parish News**

None.

**The meeting closed at 2059.**

**The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022.**