

A meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council was held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 16th February 2000 at 7.15 p.m.

Present:	Mr. Poulton (Chairman)	Mr. D. Stock (Vice-Chairman)
	Mr. C. Clark	Mr. V. Dunhill
	Mr. D. Filer	Mr. I. Knight
	Mrs. H. McCash	Mr. J. Meischke

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. Dinnin and Mr. Singleton.

2 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 15th December 1999.

Mr. Stock proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record. Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present at that meeting were in favour.

b) Review of actions

• Liaise with Alan Neville (WAGN) re meeting in March 2000

Mr. Stock reported that further to the presentation at the last Parish Council meeting, Mr. Neville had confirmed that two members of the Transport Police will be attending the Parish Council meeting to be held on the 15th March 2000 in the Pavilion.

In response to a suggestion by Mr. Neville, we had invited Sergeant Burton (our local police officer) to the meeting. However, because he is unable to attend, he will be represented by PC John Ivens (our new Rural Community Liaison Officer).

Mr. Stock asked Parish Councillors to note that because of the attendance of the police, our meeting in March is to start at 7.00 p.m.

Mr. Poulton reported that a notice will appear in the March issue of the Parish Magazine inviting residents to come and discuss issues of crime and vandalism at the Watton-at-Stone station and within the village.

• Chase EH Highways Partnership re sunken CableTel trenches

This item to be discussed under item 3, f - CableTel trenches (on page 4 of these minutes).

• Write to Three Valleys Water to identify sunken-trench problem areas

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 3 h, Three Valleys Water trenches (on page 4 & 5 of these minutes).

• Inform School Governors of the Plant a Tree event in February 2000

Mrs. McCash reported that she had again spoken to the school re the plant a tree event. No further action to be taken.

• Write to EMM Decor asking them to donate a dog-waste bin for Mill Lane

This item to be discussed under item 3, d - Dog-fouling (on page 4 of these minutes).

• Relocate dog-waste bin on Great Innings Estate to footpath 17

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 3 d, Dog-fouling (on page 4 of these minutes).

• Write to Dog Warden at EHDC re visits to Watton-at-Stone

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 3 d, Dog-fouling (on page 4 of these minutes).

• Write to Railtrack re fly-tipping at Broom Hall Farm

This action point has been completed.

To date, no response has been received from Railtrack. The Clerk to chase.

Action: J. Allsop

• Place notice in Parish Magazine re new members for Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

This action point has been completed.

• Write to EH Highways Partnership re visibility problems on Walkern Road bridge

This action point is in progress. Refer to item 3 i, Walkern Road bridge (on page 5 of these minutes).

This item to remain on the agenda under Specific Items.

• Apply for grant-aid for re-surfacing of the MPPA

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 4 a, Community Hall Trustees - MPPA (on page 6 of these minutes).

- **Inspect damage to Community Hall roof**

Mr. Poulton reported that he and Mr. Meischke had inspected the roof and have contacted Mr. Bunyan who says that he can resolve the problem. The work will be carried-out when the weather is dry.

- **Contact Football Club re the purchase of brushes and shovels for the changing rooms**

Mr. Meischke reported that the Football Club has a brush but no shovel. It was agreed that the Parish Council should wait for the arrival of the promised foot-bath, before they consider purchasing a shovel.

- **Liase over funding from the LEAF grant for additional gravel for War Memorial site**

Mr. Stock reported that he had applied to David Thorogood of EHDC for payment of the £104 that we have spent on the shrubs for the War Memorial.

Mr. Stock and Mr. Filer have spoken about the remaining grant-aid available for the War Memorial and Village Pump and sufficient money is available to purchase gravel for the War Memorial and buy shrubs for the Village Pump site.

Mr. Stock and Mr. Filer to continue to liaise over the remaining grant-aid to ensure that it is spent and invoiced to EHDC before 31st March 2000.

Action: D. Stock/ D. Filer

- **Inform Mrs. Freeman of agreed positioning for Memorial Seat on Sportsfield**

Mr. Stock reported that he had spoken to Mrs. Freeman regarding the positioning of her Memorial seat. He has agreed to meet with her and the installation-contractor on site to make sure that the seat is positioned correctly.

Action: D. Stock

- **Write to Mr. Abel Smith accepting his offer to carry-out the treatment of the woodwork on the Village Pump**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 4 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Village Pump (on page 7 of these minutes).

- **Write to Jeff Skidmore accepting part of his revised quotation for work on the Village Pump**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 4 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Village Pump (on page 7 of these minutes).

- **Contact Mr. Monk re depositing of leaves in his garden, adjacent to Village Pump**

Mr. Filer reported that he had been unable to get in contact with Mr. Monk, but will continue to chase the matter.

Action: D. Filer

Refer to item 4 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Village Pump (on page 7 of these minutes).

- **Chase D. Standen for plans for traffic-calming and safety of crossing in Station Road**

This item to be discussed under 4 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Traffic-calming and safety of crossing in Station Road (on page 7 & 8 of these minutes).

- **Contact Liz Heath (HCC) re outstanding grant money for Watton Green**

Mr. Stock reported that he had spoken to Liz Heath (HCC) concerning her letter of the 12th January and the possible loss of the grant-aid outstanding.

Mr. Stock explained the current situation to Liz Heath and she agreed to give the Parish Council the remaining funds as a contribution towards the cost of the information board. She will be given proof of how this money is spent. We have now received a cheque for £454 which has been paid into the Parish Council's bank account.

- **Write to HCC re planning application at Watton-at-Stone Primary School Rectory Lane**

This action point has been completed.

- **Chase EH Highways Partnership re reinstatement of bollards in School Lane**

Mr. Dunhill reported that he had spoken to the Rights of Way Officer concerning these bollards. Three Valleys Water is responsible for their reinstatement, which Mr. Poulton said will be carried-out soon.

Mr. Dunhill said that the Rights of Way Officer is obtaining estimates for changing the barrier at Church Walk to allow wheelchair access. Mr. Dunhill to monitor progress.

Action: V. Dunhill

- **Write to CPRE re their letter concerning safer country lanes**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to Stort Valley Housing Association re land adjacent to the Grey House**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to EH Highways Partnership re condition of road in Whempstead**

Mr. Clark reported that he had written to Dave Standen at EH Highways Partnership and is now awaiting a response. This item to be placed on the agenda under Specific Items until the matter is resolved.

- **Inform Clerk if you are able to attend the Aston Parish Council - 2000 Inter-Parish Conference**

Mr. Clark and Mrs. McCash said that they would like to attend.

- **Inform Aston Parish Council of number of Parish Councillors attending the Inter-Parish Conference**

The Clerk has written to Aston Parish Council informing them that Mr. Poulton, Mr. Stock and the Clerk will be attending the Inter-Parish Conference.

The Clerk to inform Aston Parish Council that Mr. Clark and Mrs. McCash will now be attending the conference.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Write to Mr. Maurice Parmer (Datchworth) re development of leisure pursuits in the area**

This action point has been completed.

- **Clarify with Watton School their requirement for a grant from the Parish Council**

Mrs. McCash reported that she had received plans from the School for a Millennium Courtyard, which will include mathematics and scientific zones. The school is seeking donations towards the cost of the £600 project.

Mr. Stock proposed that the Parish Council donate £50, Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Ask Mr. Berry to reproduce a 150 copies of the video “Peep into the Past”**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to EHDC re use of Community Hall facilities for the Summer Play Scheme 2000**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to EHDC re public car parks in Watton-at-Stone**

This action point has been completed.

- **Return one signed copy of revised MAFF schedule**

This action point has been completed.

- **Send donation of £50 to Victim Support East Herts**

This action point has been completed.

3 Specific items

Time Capsule

Mr. Filer reported that he had been in contact with the Hertfordshire University who have now started making the time capsule. The material being used is naval stainless steel. The cylindrical tube will have a pressed-on base and a screw-on top.

a) Parish Map

Mr. Meischke said that the Parish Map is progressing well and he will report in detail on this item at the Parish Council meeting in March.

Action: J. Meischke

b) Hertfordshire Railway Network

This item has almost completed circulation, Mr. Dunhill being the only Parish Councillor who has not yet seen it.

It was agreed that the Parish Council welcomed the changes which show Stevenage as a major part of the south-east network. A response to this effect to be sent to the Hertfordshire Railway Network when this item has completed circulation.

Action: N. Poulton/J. Allsop

c) Village Design Seminar

The CDA is holding a Village Design Seminar on Saturday 1st April 2000. Mr. Poulton said that it would be a good idea if a member of the Parish Council is able to attend the meeting, because important issues such as the criteria for planning will be discussed.

Mr. Meischke said that he will let the Clerk know if he is able to attend.

Action: J. Meischke

d) Dog-fouling

Mr. Poulton reported that he and Mr. Meischke had removed the dog-waste bin adjacent to the Great Innings play area and relocated it on footpath 17.

Mr. Poulton said that he and the EHDC Dog Warden had been on-site at footpath 17 to talk to parents who were taking their children to school. The relocated bin has already improved the area, with a significant decrease in dog-fouling on the footpath. The school has put up a notice advertising the bin and informed parents via the school newsletter.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to EHDC advising them of the new location of the bin and asking them to inform the waste-collection contractors accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Poulton said that EMM Decor had written (letter dated 7th February) to say that unfortunately they do not have the funds to purchase a dog-waste bin for Mill Lane.

However, they would be very grateful if the Parish Council was able to install a bin in Mill Lane because dog-fouling continues to be a serious problem in this area.

Mr. Stock said that because dog-fouling is a serious problem, the Parish Council should purchase a bin and pay for waste the disposal. This was agreed. Then, Mr. Poulton asked Parish Councillors to give him one month to see if he can get a sponsor to purchase the bin. **Action: N. Poulton**

This item to remain on the agenda under Specific Items.

e) Use of Community Hall & field for Community Church Service on 2nd July at 10.30

Mr. Poulton reported that St. Andrew & St. Mary Church had requested the use of the Pavilion facilities and sportsfield for the Community Service on Sunday 2nd of July 2000 at 10.30 a.m..

It was agreed that the facilities be made available for the Community Service, free of charge (as in the past).

A letter to be sent to Rev. Brian Gwinn accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**

The Clerk to contact the Football and Cricket clubs accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**

f) CableTel trenches

Mr. Stock was very happy to report that following further discussions with Keith Koffman of NTL (formerly CableTel) concerning the CableTel trenches, all repair work in Station Road and Hazeldell had now been completed. Mr. Stock said that the quality of the work appeared to be of a high standard and that NTL had done more than he expected. This is a very satisfactory conclusion to a long struggle to get something done.

Mr. Poulton thanked Mr. Stock for all his hard work in obtaining this result.

g) Footpaths

Mr. Dunhill reported that the contractors had started the re-vestment work on footpath 36 on the Lammas, adjacent to the River Beane. The stretch of footpath that needs repairing is larger than originally thought and the Countryside Management Service has agreed to grant the additional cost of approximately £70. This item to be placed on the agenda for the March 2000 meeting. **Agenda: 3/00**

Mr. Dunhill reported that the Grove footpath that runs from the Mill Lane footpath alongside the by-pass, close to the quarry edge, is in the wrong place. Inspection of the Rights of Way map has shown that the line of the path actually drops below the sand-pit area. A footpath on the correct route has now been broken through, which is a much safer route. Waymarking for the footpath will be carried-out when their is funding available from the PPP grant.

h) Three Valleys water trenches

Mr. Poulton reported that he had toured the village on foot with a representative of Three Valleys Water to identify problem areas following the rehabilitation of the water system.

Three Valleys Water have agreed that they are responsible for the reinstatement of the bollards in School Lane. These will be reinstated when they have completed their work in the area, together with infilling an area which collects water near the cycle barriers. The cycle barriers were reinstated one foot out of place, but HCC has agreed that this is acceptable.

Three Valleys Water has said that the trench-work at Perrywood Lane is acceptable. Mr. Stock has prepared a detailed list of the problem areas in Hazeldell. This list has been past to Three Valleys Water for their attention.

Mr. Filer agreed to talk to the Chairman of Three Valleys to ask him to rectify all problems within Watton-at-Stone. If there is not a satisfactory conclusion within the next month, the Parish Council will adopt the same

lines as it did with the CableTel trench work, which has just reached a successful conclusion.

Action: D. Filer

i) Walkern Road bridge

Mr. Knight reported that he intended to have an on-site with Dave Standen (EH Highways Partnership) and had written to him accordingly.

j) Great Innings: condition of roads

Mr. Dunhill reported that the surface of the roads in Great Innings are in a bad condition due to the current building works.

Mr. Poulton reported that he had had a site meeting with EHDC and Wimpey Homes on 11th February. Part of the problem with the roads is that the wrong type of tarmac surface was put down when the estate was built. Consequently, the surface cannot be scrapped clean with a mechanical digger, because it takes off the top surface of the road. Damage to the surface in this way has already been done by Wimpey Homes. Currently a person with a wheelbarrow is sweeping the roads daily and a road sweeper is cleaning the roads at the end of the day.

Mr. Poulton said that he will be meeting with Wimpey monthly to ensure that the situation is monitored and any other problems sorted out. His next meeting with them is on the 23rd February 2000.

k) Tree on Lammas

Mr. Poulton reported that EMM Decor had written to him (letter dated 7th February) concerning the tree adjacent to their building. The tree is diseased, causing the bark to fall off. They are concerned that if the tree collapsed in high winds it could seriously damage their building and the culvert. If the Parish Council is agreeable, EMM Decor is in a position to fell and remove the tree in the next few weeks (at no cost to the Parish Council). Mr. Poulton reported that Ian Davies (Environment Agency) is happy for the work to be carried-out.

This item was discussed, and it was agreed that EMM Decor be given permission to carry-out work to the tree subject to them having sole responsibility for health and safety issues on the site, and that they ensure that all materials and debris are removed from the area.

l) For Sale signs outside Willowdene

Mr. Dunhill reported that he had seen four For Sale signs attached to the tree supports in the High Street planting scheme that backs onto Willowdene and had asked the Clerk to arrange for their removal. She contacted Harvey Fairbrass at EHDC, who told her that the Parish Council had the authority to remove the signs and store them ready for collection. The three estate agents involved were then contacted and given one week to arrange for their removal.

Mr. Dunhill confirmed that all the signs had now been removed.

4 Reports**a) Sub-Committees****Budget & Finance**

Mr. Knight reported on the following items concerning the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee.

- **Audit of the Parish Council accounts for the year ending 31st March 1999**

The auditors (Pannell, Kerr & Forster) have made some minor amendments to the Parish Council accounts for the year 1998/99 and now require these to be agreed and signed by the Parish Council.

All Parish Councillors were given (at the meeting) a copy of the amended accounts. Mrs. McCash asked that in future, documents such as these should be copied to Parish Councillors prior to the meeting to enable them to be studied in detail.

One amendment to the balance sheet was agreed by the Parish Council, i.e. 'Total Assets' to read 'Assets - cash and bank accounts'.

Mr. Knight proposed that the amended accounts be approved by the Parish Council and the balance sheets for the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council be signed by the Chairman and the Clerk (as Responsible Financial officer). Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Mr. Poulton and the Clerk to sign the balance sheet.

The Clerk to send a copy of the signed accounts to the auditors.

Action: J. Allsop

At the request of the auditors, the Clerk has prepared a draft Fixed Asset Schedule for 2000/01. This has been done on the basis of using the insurance schedule as the asset valuations. The schedule was agreed, providing that the values column is headed 'Insurance Valuations'.

Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Poulton reported on the following items concerning the Community Hall Trustees.

- **MPPA - Awards for all grant**

Mr. Poulton was pleased to report that Awards For All (National Lottery) had granted the MPPA project £3,225. The project now has a shortfall of £1,409, plus £1184 for the drainage and timber work.

Mr. Poulton will now proceed with applying to the Groundwork Trust and EHDC for the additional funding. If these applications are successful, then work will proceed as soon as the children go back to school at the beginning of September.

Action: N. Poulton

Mrs. McCash to find out when the autumn-school term begins.

Action: M. McCash

Mr. Meischke to contact Doe Sport to ask them if they can arrange to start work at the beginning of September.

Action: J. Meischke

- **Community Hall roof**

This item was covered under item 2 a, Review of actions - Inspect damage to Community Hall roof (on page 2 of these minutes).

- **Toilets**

- a) **Gents external toilet**

Mr. Poulton said that the external gents toilet was left in such a disgusting state that Christine Bewley had refused to clean it.

Mr. Poulton said that he carried-out this work, which involved the removal of crisp packets and cans, that had been filled with excrement, from the toilet and surrounding area. It took him two hours to complete the task.

This is the second time that an incident like this has occurred.

Mr. Bunyan has carried-out repair-work to the broken handle and no further problems have occurred with the gents toilet in the last 5 weeks.

To avoid further problems during the school half-term holiday, it was agreed that Don Chandler be instructed to keep the external toilets closed from Monday 21st - Friday 25th February. A notice to be placed on the external toilet doors accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

- b) **Internal toilets**

Mr. Poulton reported that one of the internal toilets at the pavilion-end of the building had overflowed. Unfortunately this situation occurred when all of the Parish Council key-holders were away for the weekend and the pavilion was being hired out. Mr. Knight managed to obtain a key to the building and cleared up the water, which had spread to the hall and kitchen area.

Mr. Poulton thanked Mr. Knight for all his hard work.

Mr. Poulton said that toilets had been installed without a conventional overflow system, i.e. in theory any overflow of water goes back into the main waste pipes. Any leak in this system is not immediately evident because the cisterns are concealed behind wood-panelling (with the exception of the disabled toilet). Mr. Poulton contacted the Community Hall Trustees who agreed that Mr. Bunyan should be instructed to install an overflow system in all the internal toilets. This work has now been completed. The toilets at the pavilion-end of the building now all overflow into the disabled toilet. The toilets in the changing rooms now overflow into the small showers.

Mr. Meischke asked if hirers (for health and safety reasons) should have access to the main supply facilities allowing them to cut off the electricity and water in cases of emergency. Mr. Poulton said that the electricity system has circuit breakers. Parish Councillors debated this point and it was agreed that Mr. Meischke read through the Health & Safety manuals and report back on his findings.

Action: J. Meischke

Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Meischke reported on the following items concerning the Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee.

- **Brushes for cleaning the changing rooms**

This item was covered under item 2 a, Review of actions - Contact Football Club re the purchase of brushes and shovels for the changing rooms (on page 2 of these minutes).

- **Sportsfield fencing**

Mr. Meischke said that the barbed-wire fence in the horses field adjacent to the sportsfield had been pushed down. Because this could cause damage to the horses in the field, it was agreed that a letter be sent to Mrs. Maureen Monk (87 High Street) asking her to arrange to repair the fence.

Action: J. Allsop

The wooden fencing, which is the responsibility of the Parish Council, has been broken for some time. Mr. Filer said that he often has to repair his own fencing and felt confident that the Parish Council could do the same work (based on voluntary labour) for very little cost.

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Filer to inspect the broken fencing.

Action: N. Poulton/D. Filer

- **Grass cut 2000**

Mr. Meischke said that Highground Contracting will no longer be offering a grass cutting service. Supervisory and Ground Staff from Highground Contracting have now transferred to Land Technology

(Primary Management Facilities Services). Land Technology has submitted a quotation of £585.00 (plus VAT) for the cutting of the sportsfield grass for the 2000 season. The quotation is on same basis as the previous grass cutting contract (i.e. 20 flexible cuts, plus strimming around the perimeter of the sportsfield). This is a 3% increase on Highground Contracting's charge of £569.70 for 1999.

The Clerk contacted Mr Skidmore (who was unable to supply a quotation) and Mr. Stanley (who did not return her call).

Mr. Meischke proposed that Land Technology's quotation be accepted on condition that they carry-out the work on the same flexible basis as the Parish Council enjoyed with Highground Contracting. Mr. Knight seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Fly-tipping on allotments**

Mr. Poulton said that that one of the allotment holders had reported witnessing fly-tipping on the allotments. Mr. Poulton said that he had investigated the matter, which had now been satisfactorily resolved. The rubbish has now been removed.

Environment

Mr. Stock reported on the following items concerning the Environment Sub-Committee.

- **Watton Green**

Mr. Stock said that he has asked Mr. Stanley to move the remains of the bonfire into the large hollow on Watton Green and then fill it with top-soil as already agreed. This should be done this week. Mr. Stanley has been asked to invoice us on completion of this work, although the grass seeding will be done at a later date.

The wood for the framework of the information board has been ordered from Ternex (London) Ltd.

When Ternex has completed the cutting and machining of the timber, it will be collected by the Countryside Management Service on our behalf. Countryside Management Service will then do some additional work to the framework (e.g. add the marine plywood) before it is ready for delivery to us. Mr. Filer has agreed to store the framework until we are ready to install it on-site. Quentin Kelly will contact Mr. Filer to arrange a suitable time for delivery.

Mr. Stock and Mr. Poulton to discuss the requirements for the artwork for the information board.

Action: D. Stock/N. Poulton

- **Village Pump**

Mr. Filer said that Jeff Skidmore will complete his work on the Village Pump before the end of February. The cleaning and treatment of the woodwork will be carried-out by the Abel Smith Estate as a separate task.

Mr. Stock and Mr. Filer to agree the planting required for this area, so that they can submit invoices for the LEAF grant before it runs out on the 31st March 2000.

Action: D. Stock/ D. Filer

- **Traffic-calming and safety of crossing in Station Road**

Mr. Stock said that Dave Standen (EH Highways Partnership) had not produced a draft proposal for a "traffic-calming" scheme on the bridge in Station Road because he had been off work due to sickness.

However, to progress matters further, Mr. Stock had spoken to Mr. Standen to ask him what options are available to us. As a result of their discussions the following fax was received by Mr. Stock .

'Further to our telephone conversation of 15.2.00, I can confirm that the footway over the bridge can be improved by raising the kerbs and tarmacing the surface. Once this is done it would be possible to create some traffic-calming by using the kerb stones, road markings and signs (maybe priority signs).

However if a more extensive scheme is required this would need to be funded from next years traffic budget (if any) and the co-operation of Railtrack will need to be sort. Providing the above can be met the scheme would be carried-out by Mouchel TSC Consultants. As for the funding it may need to be on a priority basis.'

After discussion, Mr. Stock proposed that we pursue the first option. The main reasons being that it would be the easiest to achieve and we could modify and improve it in the future (e.g. if any development took place in the area). He felt that the second option would be very difficult to achieve and that other applications for traffic-calming schemes could have a higher priority than ours, e.g. accident, black-spots. Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Mr. Stock to ask Mr. Standen to prepare a draft plan for the next Parish Council meeting and inform him that Mrs. McCash will be progressing this subject further from now on.

Action: D. Stock

i) Report

Mr. Filer carried-out the sportsfield report on the 12th February, the result of which is as follows.

Sportsfield:

- Condition of grass OK.
- Litter Some by the gate.
- Dog-waste bin and fouling OK.
- Netball posts OK, but nets need replacing.
- General Fence by horses field needs repair.

Children’s Playground:

- Condition of surface OK.
- Litter/Litter bin OK.
- Large swings Seats are damaged.
- Small swings OK.
- See-Saw OK.
- Slide OK.
- Comments Generally tidy.

Community Hall:

- General Condition (Exterior) Mud on outside brick wall.
- Litter bin OK.
- Car Park OK.
- General Good. Notice board needs some repair.

Multi-Purpose Play Area:

- Surface OK, but it is worn.
- Boundary Fencing OK.
- Tennis nets One OK, the other needs a little repair.
- Litter OK.
- General Leaves in corners, catch at gate broken.

Great Innings Play Area:

- Equipment OK, but swing seat worn, slide surface muddy.
- Surfaces OK.
- Litter OK.
- Dog-waste bin and fouling Couldn’t find dog bin.
- Comments The roadway is in a bad state (Wimpey).

Allotments Area:

- Access Gate from Church Lane needs repair.
- Condition of paths between allotments OK.
- Condition of Allotments under cultivation Good, some untidy.
- Condition of Allotments not under cultivation Rubbish tipped.
- Litter Litter on unused area.
- Comments Generally OK.

Culverts on Mill Lane

- Litter and rubbish in and around culverts None.
- Dog-fouling None.
- Comments OK.

Salt bins

- Perrywood Lane OK.
- Great Innings OK.
- Station Road OK.
- Moorymead Close Two salt bins. Both OK.
- Hazeldell OK - Lid needs repairs.

Not a lot of salt in most bins, but enough.

General Comments

A lot of mud on roads caused by water works.
Great Innings roads are a mess due to Wimpey construction.

• **Fence**

Mr. Filer and Mr. Poulton to inspect the fence by the horses field.

Action: D. Filer/N. Poulton

- **Seats on 2-bay swings**
These seats are now in very poor condition. Mr. Poulton to inspect them. **Action: N. Poulton**
- **Sports & Social Club notice board**
It was agreed that a letter be sent to the Sports & Social Club asking them to repair or remove their notice board adjacent to the Community Hall. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Great Innings Dog-waste bin**
This bin has been re-located to footpath 17.

5 Planning

a) Applications

i) **Corner of High Street and Great Innings - Amended plans**

Twelve terraced houses with access and car parking facilities

Mr. Poulton reported that the applicants had submitted new plans which include double yellow-lines along the High Street and Great Innings frontages and no weather vanes on the roof top. These were submitted rather than altering the original plans.

The Parish Council does not need to respond.

EHDC has now granted planning permission for this application. (See 5 b ii, Planning decisions on page 10 of these minutes).

iii) **Blue Bury Farm, Walkern Road**

Mobile dwelling

Mr. Knight reported that he had been in contact with the residents of Walkern Road and High Elms Lane who would be affected by this application. The residents were unanimous in their objections and are to write to the planning department accordingly.

After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed that their objections to this application were the same as those to the previous application for this site (i.e. for an agricultural dwelling: submitted in April 99).

It was agreed to write to the planning department stating that the Parish Council objects to the above application on the following grounds.

1. Planning permission was refused previously (your ref. 3/85/0383/08).
2. The dwelling lies within the metropolitan green belt.
3. The advantages listed in the previous application 3/99/063/OP/CT (which was withdrawn), under item 3 of the covering letter attached to the application, are not planning grounds for granting approval.

Action: J. Allsop

ii) **Watton-at-Stone Playgroup, School Lane**

Outline planning permission for residential development

Because his garden backs onto the site involved, Mr. Poulton did not wish to take part in the Parish Council's discussions and therefore left the meeting temporarily. Mr. Stock took the chair.

Parish Councillors studied the application for residential development on the Watton-at-Stone Playgroup site. The plot of land consists of 736 square metres and is owned by HCC.

After lengthy discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council could not object to this outline application because there is already a building on this site with residential properties on either side. However, all Parish Councillors were very concerned about traffic movements in the area, particularly on this narrow stretch of School Lane. Also, Parish Councillors wanted an assurance that any development would have no impact on existing rights of way.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to the planning department accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Poulton came back to the meeting and took the chair again.

b) Decisions

i) **2 Whitehouse Close**

Conservatory to rear

-EHDC - permission granted

ii) **Corner of High Street and Great Innings - Amended plans**

Twelve terraced houses with access and car parking facilities

-EHDC - permission granted.

Mr. Poulton read out the following extract from the planning decision (dated 14th February).

‘The application is granted subject to the applicant, within six months of the date of the resolution, entering into a legal agreement pursuant to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in respect of the following matter (s):-

to fund the serving of a traffic order for double yellow-lines along the High Street and Great Innings frontages.’

6 Correspondence received

a) Hertfordshire Constabulary - re letter concerning Neighbourhood Watch

Mr. Poulton summarised the content of a letter from Superintendent Phil Picton (dated 4th February) concerning the resignation of Mrs Knight as a Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator. Inspector Roy Larter has visited Mrs Knight to discuss her concerns and the relationship between the Police and Neighbourhood Watch. The Police rely heavily upon co-ordinators to give reassurance to local people that they are very safe living in the villages of East Herts. Superintendent Picton will be attending the Inter Parish Conference (hosted by Aston Parish Council) on the 1st March and has asked that the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council makes itself known to him.

Mr. Poulton then read out the penultimate paragraph in Superintendent Picton’s letter as follows.

‘On a final note, can I mention the recent figures produced by the Government concerning crime levels. These showed that East Herts has the lowest levels of offending across Hertfordshire and for violent crime is in the top 10 safest places in the country. That is a real credit to the people who live in the area and the commitment to safety shown by the vast majority. I would be grateful if your local Councillors could take any opportunities they may have to use this information to reassure any parishioners who feel vulnerable.’

Mr. Poulton then read out Mr. Heald’s letter dated 9th February 2000 concerning Watton Watch.

Further to our earlier correspondence about Watton Watch, I have seen a copy of the response sent to you by Superintendent Phil Picton and have had an number of discussions with senior police officers in recent months. I believe their decision to appoint a Community Liaison Constable for the villages will greatly assist communication in the future.

Please do keep me closely in touch with your experiences the coming months.’

b) Hertfordshire Constabulary - Rural Community Liaison Officer

Mr. Poulton read out a letter (dated 1st February) from PC 1332 Ivens as follows.

‘I am in post as your local officer in this area with the particular responsibility for forming and maintaining links with the community as a whole.

I have many years experience and would like to attend you council meetings at times when issues are pertinent to police matters.

I am available at Hertford Police Station on the above telephone number and look forward to getting to know and meet you at a mutually convenient time.’

Mr. Poulton said that PC Ivens will be attending the Parish Council meeting on 15th March 2000.

c) EHDC - Policing arrangements

This item has been on circulation and no comments were made by Parish Councillors.

d) Oliver Heald MP - re policing responses

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter form Oliver Heald (dated 21st January).

‘I have recently been contacted by a number of constituents concerned about the Police response to rural crime, particularly burglary, petty vandalism and speeding. These are matters which I take up regularly in meetings with the senior Police officers responsible for the policing of my Constituency.

It would be very helpful to know the extent to which crime is a problem in your Parish at the moment. I would also be interested to know whether your Parish Council makes use of the regular consultative meetings organised by the Police throughout the area and you impressions of these meetings.

Any information you are able to give me will be most helpful in my discussions with the local Police.

You may find it helpful to know that my office telephone/fax number is 01763 247640 and my e-mail address is “healdo@parliament.uk”.’

It was agreed that the Parish Council would require a full list of all offences throughout the Parish (which includes Whempstead) before they could respond to Oliver Heald’s letter.

A letter be sent to Superintendent Phil Picton asking him to give the Parish Council a list of all offences that have occurred in the Parish within the past twelve months. **Action: J. Allsop**

This item to be placed on the agenda for the Parish Council meeting to be held on the 15th March 2000, under Specific Items. **Agenda: 3/00**

e) Pamela Filer, Chairman of Victim Support East Herts - Letter of thanks for grant aid

Mr. Poulton read out Mrs. Filer's letter of thanks for the £50 grant, which is to be put towards helping victims living in Watton-at-Stone.

f) Home Office - Confirmation of Byelaws

Mr. Meischke reported that the byelaws for the sportsfield had been confirmed by the Secretary of State and will come into operation on the 27th of February 2000.

g) Community Agency for Hertfordshire - Village events dairy

This item was copied to all Parish Councillors asking them to identify any village events.

Mr. Poulton to complete the village events diary for Watton-at-Stone and return it to the Community Agency for Hertfordshire before 1st March 2000. **Action: N. Poulton**

h) Home Front Service on 5th March 2000 at Cathedral & Abbey Church of St. Albans

Following a Government initiative, the Cathedral and Abbey Church of Saint Albans will be holding a Memorial Service at St Albans Abbey to commemorate all those who played such a valuable part on the Home Front during and after the Second World War. A notice for the service, which will be held on the 5th March 2000 has been placed on the Parish Council notice board.

i) HCC - School Admissions for 2001 - 2002

This item has completed circulation. Mr. Clark reported that the proposed admission rules do not show any major changes to those already in existence. It was agreed that the Parish Council has no objections to the proposed admission rules and will respond accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**

j) Government Office for the South East - Regional Planning Guidance for the S.E.

The Regional Planning Guidance Team at the Government Office for the South East has written (letter dated 27th January) to acknowledge receipt of the Parish Council's letter to John Prescott MP re concerns over the proposals for large numbers of additional new houses being built in Hertfordshire. The Parish Council should respond again to the Consultation Draft Regional Planning Guidance with proposed changes when it is published.

k) HCC - Regional planning guide -in the South East & the threat from house building

Mr. Poulton read out a letter (dated 31st January) from Jane Pitman, Chairman of the Environment Committee at HCC. Mrs. Pitman asks that the Parish Council writes to John Prescott MP expressing its views on Professor Crows' findings for additional new homes for Hertfordshire.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to Mrs. Pitman informing her that the Parish Council has already written to John Prescott MP, at the request of the CPRE, and enclosing a copy of our letter to him. **Action: J. Allsop**

l) Watton-at-Stone millennium Mayfayre & truck pull

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter (dated 2nd February)

'Mayfayre 2000 will close Watton-at-Stone High Street (except for use by Emergency vehicles) during part of the afternoon of Monday 1st May 2000; and create a traditional Medieval Mayday incorporating optional 'period costume'.

Morris dancers and Maypole dancing will support the varied stalls, games, displays and children's events that will compliment the day.

May we therefore invite you to contact us early and book your stall, craft stall, game, car boot or Truck Pulling team (application form enclosed). Special rates may be discussed for your particular need, which will hopeful gain profit to yourselves and our charitable cause.

Please ask you friends and associates if you feel they would be interested in taking part or join us as helpers; contact us without obligation at any time'

It was agreed that the Parish Council book a stall to sell the Peep into the Past videos. **Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Poulton agreed to man the stall and asked Parish Councillors to contact him if they are also able to help, so that he can draw up a rota for the day. **Action: Parish Councillors**

m)EHDC Concessionary bus permits - bulk issue March/April 2000

A letter has been received from EHDC re the issue of bus permits for 2000. Mr. Poulton proposed that he and the Clerk carry-out the bulk issue of bus permits in the village and that (as in previous years) the Parish Council donate 50% of the cost of each permit. Mr. Stock seconded the motion and all present were in favour. The Clerk to contact EHDC accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**

n) EHDC - Land use survey 1999

EHDC has written to thank the Parish Council for responding to its request for information on land use within the Parish.

o) HCC - Hertfordshire's local transport plan - consultation

This item has been placed on circulation. A response to the document is required before the 31st March 2000. This item to be placed on the agenda for the Parish Council to be held on the 15th March 2000, under Specific Items. **Agenda 3/00**

7 Reports from other Organisations

• Watton-at-Stone JMI School

Mrs. McCash reported that the Governors had given their approval to the Playschool being housed in the mobile classroom at the school.

The Playschool still has some safety concerns which they wish to resolve.

• Watton-at-Stone Conservation Society

Mr. Stock said that he was not present at the meeting and asked Mr. Dunhill to report instead.

Mr. Dunhill said that the Conservation Society had talked about the following issues.

- Concern about the mud on the Great Innings roads due to the Wimpy Homes building site.

Mr. Dunhill suggested that they write direct to the EH Highways Partnership about their concerns.

- Mr. Abel Smith has agreed to the part of the Millennium Walk which passes over his land.

Advertising for the Millennium Walk will take place later in the year (around harvest time in September). The Millennium Walk could also be included on the Parish Map.

- Concern that the temporary road in Church Lane, used by the contractors who built the additional school classrooms, has not been closed. They fear that it could attract travellers to the area.

Mr. Poulton said that the school is aware to the problem.

Mrs. McCash to ask the School Governors to place this item on their next agenda. **Action: H. McCash**

- The Conversation Society will be holding their AGM on Thursday 23rd March at 8.00 p.m. in the Community Hall

• Watton 2000

Mr. Dunhill reported that the next meeting of Watton 2000 will be held on Tuesday 22nd February in the Community Hall.

8 Accounts/Correspondence

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash

Payments

	Receipts
Boardmans Photocopying charges	13.16
Stamps + envelope for byelaws	0.77
HCC - A4 Folders + filing clips	3.92
Stamps for byelaws	<u>0.52</u>
	<u>18.37</u>

Cheques required

Victim Support	Donation	50.00
J. Allsop	150 x 26p stamps	39.00
Vicol Supplies	Line marker for Sports & Social Club	351.33
Inland Revenue	Tax & NIC for Clerks wages	143.37
Watton Nursery	Plants for War Memorial	104.00
K. Jones	48 hours litterpick	203.52
D R Monk	Leaf pick carried out on 10th to 11th January 2000	100.00
D R Monk	War Memorial garden maintenance 1/10/99-31/12/99	31.25
D. Chandler	8 hours litterpick	33.92
J. Allsop	-February salary	420.80
	-Cable phone calls to 4/02/00	<u>26.79</u>
		<u>1503.98</u>

Cheques received

J. Booker	Donation	25.00
I. Knight	Line marker for Sports & Social Club (Ex. VAT)	299.00
HCC	HCC - Grant for information board at Watton Green	454.00
Neighbourhood Watch	Transfer of remaining funds to the Parish Council	<u>137.06</u>
		<u>915.06</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash

Payments

Eastern Energy 167.76

Receipts

D. Stock - Main Hall hire 30.00

Floodlighting to 26/1/99 107.00

Jim Keen - Main Hall hire 20.00

Cheques required

David Bunyan Repair external toilet + install overflow system on internal toilets 182.48

H M Customs & Excise Ref. VAT rebate for 12/99 78.00

D. Chandler 4 hours work 16.96

Mrs. C. Bewley 32 hours cleaning 160.00

David Bunyan To replace ball valve to Heatray Sadia heater in roof space 43.18

HCC Cleaning materials 55.67

536.29

Cheques received

Young Farmers Pavilion hire 64.80

Tennis Club Main Hall hire 143.00

Badminton Club Main Hall hire 162.00

369.80

Mr. Dunhill proposed that the accounts be paid, Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

9 Chairman's / Clerk's Report

Mr. Poulton reported on the following correspondence received.

• **PPP**

PPP has requested that we submit our report and annual return for the year 1999/00. Also that we submit an application for grant-aid for the year 2000/01.

Mr. Dunhill to act accordingly.

Action: V. Dunhill

• **Polar Bear Club**

A new physical well-being club has started in the village. It is being run by Travaine Duckworth (physiotherapist). They wish to undertake an environmental project within the village. Mr. Poulton suggested litter picking or weeding the church car park.

Mr. Poulton to inform Mrs. Duckworth accordingly.

Action: N. Poulton

• **Village of the Year competition**

It was agreed that Watton-at-Stone enter the Village of the Year competition for 2000. This replaces the Best Kept Village competition held in previous years.

Mr. Poulton agreed to complete the relevant forms.

Action: N. Poulton

• **Green County Hertfordshire Strategy Review**

A meeting to discuss the review will be held on 29th February.

Mr. Poulton agreed to attend the meeting and respond to the review.

Action: N. Poulton

• **The meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.**

• **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 15th March 2000. On this occasion the meeting is to start at 7 p.m.**