

A meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council was held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 3rd October 2001 at 7.15 p.m.

Present: Mr. N. Poulton (Chairman) Mr. D. Stock (Vice-Chairman)
 Mr. C. Clark Mrs. S. Davies
 Mrs. C. Dinnin Mr. V. Dunhill
 Mr. D. Filer Mr. I. Knight
 Mr. J. Meischke

Police: PC John Ivens

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. McCash.

2 Update on policing matters by P.C. Ivens

Mr. Poulton welcomed PC John Ivens to the meeting. PC Ivens last attended a Parish Council meeting on the 27th June 2001.

PC Ivens thanked the Parish Council for writing to Superintendent Terry Cox to formally complain about the lack of policing in Watton-at-Stone. Watton-at-Stone has now been identified as a problem area and extra policing has been arranged for the village accordingly. Police officers will patrol the village on foot between approximately 1600 and 2000 hours each evening until the end of December, at which time the situation will be reviewed. There will also be additional cover at different times of the day.

This new police cover began on Monday 1st October. Mrs. Davies said that the police had visited the Youth Club on every occasion since it reopened. She welcomed this and said that the visits had been received in a very positive manner.

The crime figures for the last three months are only slightly up on the previous period.

A first-time youth offender has been arrested for breaking a window and another is to be arrested for paint-spraying a roadside cabinet. A third person is due to be arrested for setting light to the cricket table.

First-time offenders are usually given a formal reprimand. Approximately eight youths form the core of the problems in the village.

PC Ivens said that in his position of Rural Community Liaison Officer he used to be responsible for Buntingford, Sawbridgeworth, the Hadams and our area. He will now just be looking after a smaller area that includes Watton-at-Stone and is our named constable.

Mr. Poulton said that our new Inspector, Pat Rawle (who is taking over from Inspector Shirley Godman) was unable to attend tonight's meeting due to a prior engagement. He asked to meet with Parish Councillors on Friday 28th September to discuss policing problems in Watton-at-Stone and how the police intend to try and solve the current problems we have with youths and vandalism. Mr. Poulton attended the meeting at the Community Hall. Also present was PC John Ivens and PC Martin Singleton. They then visited the Watton-at-Stone Primary School where they were met by the acting-head Mrs. Lisa Manell.

Mr. Filer said that he attended the Hertfordshire Police Authority meeting in Aston on 10th September, during which the changes in the policing structure were announced and discussed.

One of the main issues at the moment is the problem of recruiting enough officers to the force. The starting pay in Hertfordshire is £6,000 less than in the MET. In 2002 there will be a staff shortage of between 200 to 300 police officers. The main need is for a visible police presence. The police officer at local level who arrests offenders will no longer be responsible for interviewing etc.

PC Ivens said that it would be a great help if we could get the name of someone who would be interested in becoming a special constable. At present this is an unpaid position, however all expenses are paid.

- PC Ivens left the meeting at 7.35 pm.

3 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday on 5th September 2001**

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

b) Review of actions

- **Tidy-up metal protrusions from the sides of the two boot scrapers**
Mr. Meischke said that he had not received any feedback on the work he has already done to the boot scrapers.
- **Install post at MPPA when the path is being re-laid**
Mr. Knight said that this action point is still outstanding. **Action: I. Knight**
- **Attend Hertfordshire Police Authority meeting in Aston on 10th September**
Mr. Filer said that the meeting was very well attended and included a number of residents from Watton-at-Stone.
Refer to item 2, Update on policing matters by P.C. Ivens (on this page).
- **Write to Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership) re damage to surface dressing in Beane Road**
This action point has been completed.
Refer to item 7 1, EH Highways Partnership – surface dressing (on page 11 of these minutes).
- **Purchase cushions for the existing seats**
Seat cushions have been purchased for the Parish Council meeting room, at a cost of £3 each. However, Parish Councillors agreed that the cushions were a bit too small for comfort and should be returned.
The Clerk to obtain larger cushions for the seats. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Write to Camstead Homes to ask if they could clean up and replant the flower bed outside Longmeadow**
This action point has been completed.
No response has been received to our letter of the 19th September. The Clerk to write again if no response has been received within two weeks. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Write to EHDC re Summer Play Scheme and return their deposit cheque of £100**
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to Police re vandalism in village and copy letter to Mr. O. Heald, Mr. B. Hammond and Mr. D. Filer**
This action point has been completed.
- **Sign two copies of accounts for the year 2000/01**
This action point has been completed.
- **Send signed copy of accounts for the year 2000/01 to Pannell, Kerr & Forster**
This action point has been completed.
- **Arrange a date for the next Budget & Finance Sub-Committee meeting**
This action point has been completed.
Refer to item 5 a, Budget & Finance Sub-Committee - Verbal report on meeting held on the 2nd October 2001 (on page 5 of these minutes).
- **Return completed register check and annual return for year ended 31st March 2001 to the Charity Commission**
This action point has been completed.
- **Invite the Crime Prevention Officer at Hertford Police Station to attend the next meeting of the Community Hall Trustees on 11th December 2001**
Refer to item 5 a, Community Hall Trustees - Crime Guard (on page 5 of these minutes).
- **Speak with Mrs Bewley about the Main Hall flooring and any cleaning tools or materials that she requires**
This action point has been completed.
Mr. Stock said that the condition of the floor has improved.
- **Speak to Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership) re new double-sided sign for Community Hall**
Mr. Poulton said that he had spoken to Mr. Jack who was mortified at his mistake. A single-sided sign was made, instead of a double-sided one. A further single-sided sign will be made and attached to the other sign. These will then be re-sited to the other side of the road. On behalf of the EH Highways Partnership, Mr. Poulton apologised that the sign had to be erected again at the same site and then re-sited on the opposite side of the road above the 'toilet sign' in the High Street.
- **Fit additional brackets to new seat on sportsfield**
Mr. Poulton said that he and Mr. Meischke had inspected the seat and felt that no additional brackets should be installed until a problem arises.
This course of action was agreed.

- **Obtain information on byelaws for Watton Green and the Lammas**
This item to be discussed under 5 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Watton Green, Byelaws (on page 6 of these minutes).
- **Contact Tony Bradford to arrange for the purchase of the plants and then organise a planting date**
This item to be discussed under 5 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Lammas, Tree planting on Lammas (on page 7 of these minutes).
- **Write to Mr. Stanley re Lammas grass cuttings**
This action point has been completed.
Mr. Stanley has now completed the work. He baled all of the grass cuttings on the Lammas and then deposited them on site in the agreed area. However, the bales self-combusted and the fire brigade were called to put the fire out. It had been wrongly presumed at first that youngsters had been responsible for setting light to the bales.
- **Instruct Mr. Whitehead to cut sportsfield hedge**
This action point has been completed.
Mr. Poulton said that Mr. Whitehead would be carrying-out the hedge cutting sometime between the end of October and the beginning of November.
- **Write again to EHDC re condition of safety surface tiles and graffiti on one of the new pieces of equipment**
This action point has been completed.
Refer to item 7 d, EHDC - Great Innings Play Area (on page 10 of these minutes).
- **Write again to Stort Valley Housing Association asking them to cut-back the hedge as a matter of urgency**
This action point has been completed.
Refer to item 5 b i, Sportsfield –Report, Allotment Area (on page 8 of these minutes).
- **Write to the Sports & Social Club re re-seeding of goal mouths at the end of the football season**
This action point has been completed.
It was agreed to write to the Sports & Social Club in April 2002 to remind them to re-seed the goalmouths. **Action 5/02: J. Allsop**
- **Write to EHDC re planning application for Amenity Land, Motts Close**
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to EHDC re planning application for Watton-at-Stone Memorial Hall**
This action point has been completed.
- **Write again to the Church of England Legal Office about draft Deed of Waiver re the sportsfield**
This action point has been completed.
Refer to item 7 b, Claytons - Deed of Waiver on sportsfield (on page 9 of these minutes).
- **Contact Andrew Mills re date for RoSPA inspection of sportsfield**
Mr. Poulton reported that RoSPA carry-out about 40 playground inspections on behalf of EHDC over a three-day period. Because the schedule is so tight, they would not be able to meet with the Parish Council to discuss our playground, also such a meeting could detract from the thoroughness of the inspection.
It was agreed that because the slide (which was the main problem) is being removed, a meeting with RoSPA is no longer necessary. Any problems we have can be discussed directly with Wicksteed when the new play equipment is installed.
- **Ask Mr. Borlase if he has removed the trees overhanging Perrywood Lane**
Mr. Filer confirmed that Mr. Borlase has removed the trees.
- **Read the DEFRA document and complete the necessary forms**
Mr. Dunhill said that he had read through the document and we were not required to complete any of the enclosed forms.
- **Read Audit Commission document on a new approach to local council audit report back to the Parish Council**
Mr. Filer said that he had not yet read through this document but would report back to the Parish Council during its meeting on 7th November. **Action: D. Filer**
- **Place Watton Town Council information on circulation**
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to Debra Freeman thanking her for donation of a seat on sportsfield**
This action point has been completed.

- **Contact Conservation Society re funds**
This action point has been completed.
- **Write in support of Mr. Thurlow's application to move the post office**
This action point has been completed.

c) Action points outstanding for more than two months

- **Erect new footpath and bridleway signs**
Mr. Dunhill said that this action point is still outstanding.

Action: V. Dunhill

4 Specific Items

a) Grass verges – monthly inspection

The grass verges were cut for the last time this season during the week beginning the 10th September and are all in a good condition

This item to be removed from the agenda until May 2002.

Agenda: 05/02

b) Playground equipment

Mrs. Davies was pleased to report that EHDC has agreed our application for a grant of £6,250 towards the playground equipment project. This grant equals the amount already raised.

Mrs. Davies said that an order had now been placed with Wicksteed Leisure and she is waiting for them to set a date for a site visit to finalise details. Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke agreed to attend the site meeting with Mrs. Davies.

Action: S. Davies/N. Poulton/J. Meischke

It was agreed to write a letter of thanks to EHDC for their grant.

Action: J. Allsop

c) Policing issues

Refer to item 2, Update on policing matters by P.C. Ivens (on page 1 of these minutes).

Mr. Poulton said that the neighbourhood watch meeting held on the 11th September had been very poorly attended, with only 6 members of the public (one being the Clerk) turning up. However, the meeting had been positive and interested persons had put their names forward. Mr. Poulton said that he had also recruited a new resident in the High Street.

Mr. Watson produced a very good article in the Parish News about the current problems we are experiencing in the village. This was followed up with an article in the Hertfordshire Mercury. Mr. Poulton said that many residents in Wotton-at-Stone had approached him to say how pleased they were about the contents of both articles.

d) Long Meadow, High Street, Campstead Homes

Mr. Poulton said that he has been in contact with EHDC's planning department to ask that the double-yellow lines stipulated in the planning consent for Long Meadow now be installed. Mr. Poulton has also been in contact with Camstead Homes asking them to erect the road name sign showing Long Meadow as the address for these properties.

e) Footpath between Rivershill and Bull Car Park

Mr. Dunhill said that it had been brought to his attention that the footpath between Rivershill and the Bull Car Park was overgrown. Also, that some of the paving slabs were uneven. Mr. Dunhill said that he had inspected the paving slabs and that the unevenness of each slab was less than the 1 cm allowed and therefore they did not require any attention. Mr. Poulton said that he had also inspected the paving slabs and agreed with Mr. Dunhill's findings.

Mr. Poulton said that he had instructed Jeff Skidmore to cut back the overgrowth along the footpath, and the work had now been completed.

f) Wotton-at-Stone Railway Station

Mr. Stock said that whilst he was using the railway station recently, he discovered that the platform-speakers used for travel announcements had been turned off. When pursuing this matter he was led to believe that the speakers had been turned off in response to a complaint from a resident of Moorymead. Mr. Stock felt that we must continue to do our best to encourage the use of the station and thus the needs of passengers should be priority consideration.

With this in mind Mr. Stock said that he had contacted Alan Neville (of WAGN) who informed him that he was no longer the Group Station Manager for the Hertford Loop. However, he did say that he would investigate the matter because he was aware that the speakers had been switched off.

Mr. Stock proposed that we write to WAGN asking for the name of the new Group Station Manager and at the same time ask why the speakers are not working and request they be made operational without delay

because it is important that passengers are made aware of train delays and cancellations as early as possible.

Mr. Poulton seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop

5 Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

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

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

Mr. Filer said that the 6-monthly statement of accounts will be presented to the Parish Council during its meeting on 7th November. This is because the bank statements on both accounts have not yet been received and therefore it was not possible to finalise the reports.

Action: D. Filer

- **Verbal report on meeting held on the 2nd October 2001**

- **Hire Charges**

The Recommendation from the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee is that the:

- Sports & Social Club hire charges shall rise from £1800 to £1836 (a rise of 2%)
- Community Hall hire charges shall remain the same as at present.

- **Staff remuneration**

The Recommendation from the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee is that:

- Christine Bewley's rate of pay shall remain at £5.25 per hour
- Don Chandler's rate of pay shall be increased from £5.00 to £5.25 per hour to bring it in line with Mrs. Bewley's.

These increases to take effect as from 1st April 2002.

- **Budget 2002/03**

Mr. Filer said that the budget figures for the year 2002/2003 were discussed in much detail.

He is to present the budget figures at the Parish Council meeting to be held on the 7th November 2001.

Action: D. Filer

Community Hall Trustees

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

- **Crime Gard (i.e. a metal-guard product for windows)**

Mr. Poulton said he had been in contact with Hertford Police and was informed that our Crime Prevention Officer for the area is PC Robin Ansell.

PC Ansell discussed the Community Hall problems with Mr. Poulton and confirmed that CCTV cameras would be of little use, unless supported by adequate lighting (including infra red), which would cost a considerable amount of money. However, he did give Mr. Poulton the names of two companies that deal in metal guards for windows.

Mr. Poulton, Mr. Stock, Mr. Meischke and the Clerk met with representatives from Enerco Security Solutions, the local distributors for Crime Gard, on site at the Community Hall. Their quotation for covering all the windows (except the high-level windows in the Main Hall) with Crime Gard is in the region of £15,000. The work could be carried-out in stages; for example, the price for the Parish Council room windows would total £1,568.

He then showed Parish Councillors a sample of the material used, which is a black metal mesh. The metal framework would be painted to match the existing woodwork. Mr. Meischke said that when the sample was put against the outside windows, after a time the eye detracted from the black mesh and the visual impact lessened.

Mr. Poulton, Mr. Stock and Mr. Meischke are all concerned that vandals could spray paint on the mesh and this would then go through onto the glass. The only way to clean the windows would be to remove the Crime Gards, which are not designed for easy removal. Mr. Poulton said that he was loathed to have the work done and while we are still able to claim on insurance, the cost to the Community Hall Trust is not too great. Mr. Meischke said that all high-level windows in the Community Hall are now being replaced with polycarbonate and the low windows with laminated glass (i.e. only to replace broken windows).

It was agreed to write to Enerco Security Solutions stating that we have agreed not to install Crime Gard Barriers at the present time, but will continue to monitor the situation.

Action: N. Poulton/J. Allsop

Mr. Poulton said that he and Mr. Meischke had met with some of the youngsters who have said that there is nothing for them to do within the village. It was stated that a Watton-at-Stone parent owns a bike ramp in Stapleford, and might offer it to the Parish Council. This could be installed next to the MPPA. The

Comment [C1]:

Parish Council would have to pay for the installation charge. Mr. Poulton suggested that a shelter, similar to the one at the Great Innings Play Area, could also be installed adjacent to the MPPA. Mr. Meischke said that he could transport the bike ramp from Stapleford to Watton-at-Stone.

It was agreed that Mr. Poulton meet with the parent to discuss the bike ramp further and report back to the Parish Council at its meeting on the 7th November 2001. **Action: N. Poulton/ J. Meischke**

- **Wheelie bin**

Mr. Poulton said that because of the increasing problems we were having with the wheelie bin, he obtained the agreement of Mr. Stock and Mr. Meischke for it to be removed from site. Now that EHDC organises the litterpicking and removal of rubbish for the Parish Council, there is no longer a need for such a large bin. Mr. Poulton has obtained a household-sized wheelie bin in its place. This is currently sited in one of the large changing rooms.

It was agreed to put the small green wheelie bin, which is already in our possession, in the kitchen. **Action: N. Poulton/J. Meischke**

Recreation & Amenities

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

- **Allotments – strimming of allotments not in use**

Jeff Skidmore has strimmed the allotments not in use, with the exception of the areas of brambles, which he has left untouched.

- **Manhole cover in sportsfield**

Mr. Poulton said that he wrote to Thames Water on 3rd September asking them to inspect the two manhole covers on the sportsfield. These are badly corroded and likely to collapse in the near future. He then read out part of a letter from Thames Water (dated 19th September).

‘The manholes shown on the plan do not belong to Thames Water as we have no assets at these locations and therefore must from part of a private system.’

Mr. Meischke agreed to speak to Mr. Hutson who is the most likely owners of the manhole covers. **Action: J. Meischke**

Environment

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

- **Watton Green**

Mr. Stock proposed that Mr. Stanley be instructed to cut the grass and trim the ditch at Watton Green before the end of October. Mr. Filer seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to act accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Byelaws**

The Clerk has obtained a copy of the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions’ (DTLR) model byelaws for pleasure grounds, public walks and open spaces. These include a byelaw for fires.

This to be placed on circulation so that Parish Councillors can indicate which byelaws they feel should be applied to Watton Green and/or the Lammas. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Lammas**

- **Rabbit problem**

Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors were given a copy of Mr. Abel Smith’s letter (dated 12th September) lodging a formal complaint against the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council for the intrusion of rabbits onto his field adjacent to the Lammas.

Mr. Abel Smith is claiming a reduction in his crop yield due to the rabbits on the Lammas.

Parish Councillors discussed the subject at length, including the different options for the disposal of rabbits and the problem of rabbit migration between adjacent areas of land. Mr. Stock explained that Mr. Adams had restricted access to the Lammas during part of last winter due to the Foot and Mouth problem and had therefore only taken a small number of rabbits from the Lammas. Mr. Stock also reported that Mr. Adams would not wish to ferret the Lammas after gas has been used. Mr. Abel Smith has entered into a Stewardship Scheme, which requires him to leave an 8-metre strip around the boundary of the field. This could be one of the reasons for the reduction in crop yield.

Mr. Poulton said that if we do not address the problem, DEFRA has the right to make us carry-out whatever is necessary to reduce the rabbit population. It was agreed that gassing and shooting could possibly give us a public-relations problem and should be avoided if at all possible.

A letter to be sent to Mr. Abel Smith telling him that Mr. Adams ferrets the Lammas and the paddock at the far end of the Lammas (this land is owned by the Abel Smith Estate) and enclosing a copy of the agreements. Also, asking him for his suggestion on how to resolve this common problem.

Action: N. Poulton/J. Allsop

• **Concrete fixture/cables on the Lammas**

Mr. Poulton read out part of a letter from Thames Water (dated 19th September).

‘Thank you for your letter of 3rd September addressed to Mr. D. Edge and passed to me for my reply.

I passed a copy of your letter and accompanying map to the local sewage office in order that they may investigate this matter further. I can confirm that we have now inspected the concrete bollard and it would appear that it is part of the trunk sewer system. When this has been confirmed I will contact you and advise of our findings.’

If Thames Water has not written to us by the 17th October, we write again asking for a response.

Action: J. Allsop

• **Tree planting on Lammas**

Mr. Dunhill reported that he had spoken to Tony Bradford re the additional shrubs required to replace the 2 to 3 metres of hedging that needs replanting. He was advised that the bushes should be planted in late November/early December.

As part of the Stewardship Scheme, the schedule for this year had been to plant 130 trees. However, in light of a re-assessment of the planting in woodland area, we did not plant any trees this year. 70 trees will need planting between now and next September to complete the planting scheme.

Countryside Management Service could provide volunteer labour on 21st November (which is during the National Tree week). Mr. Dunhill to confirm this date with Countryside Management Service.

Action: V. Dunhill

Mr. Dunhill to place an order for the plants, stakes and tree guards required.

Action: V. Dunhill

• **PPP**

Mr. Dunhill said that the Countryside Management Service had considered installing a kissing gate to replace the broken style on the Church meadow. However, to install it, part of the existing hedge would have to be removed. An alternative option would be to remove the style at the end of the allotments and use it to refurbish the broken one.

After discussion, it was agreed to ask the Countryside Management Service to repair the broken style and the Parish Council would pay any costs involved and retain the style at the end of the allotments (the removal of this style would provide bike riders with a short-cut between Glebe Court and the War Memorial).

Mr. Dunhill to act accordingly.

Action: V. Dunhill

b) Sportsfield

i) **Report**

Mr. Poulton carried-out the sportsfield report on the 1st October, the result of which is as follows.

• **Sportsfield:**

Condition of grass	Very bad around goalmouths.
Litter	None.
Dog-waste bin and fouling	None.
Netball posts	OK.
General	Hedge needs cutting.

• **Children’s Playground:**

Condition of surface	OK – hole appearing by see-saw.
Litter/Litter bin	Empty.
Large swings	OK – but seats need replacing soon.
Small swings	OK.
See-Saw	OK.
Slide	OK.
Comments	None.

• **Community Hall:**

General Condition	Mud on windows.
Litter bin	Empty.
Car Park	OK.
General	OK.

• **Multi-Purpose Play Area:**

Surface	OK – but somebody has been doing “wheelies” and left tyre marks.
Boundary Fencing	Good.

Tennis nets Good – but on floor.
 Litter None.
 General Jeff has just strimmed around area.
 Area needs sweeping.

• **Great Innings Play Area:**

Equipment OK, graffiti removed.
 Surfaces Checked tiles with EHDC who own equipment. They and the manufacturers are happy with the condition of the tiles.
 Litter None
 Dog-waste bin and fouling None.
 Comments None.

• **Allotments Area:**

Access Hedge needs cutting still. Spoke to foreman, he asked me if I knew anyone to cut hedge. Mr. Smith, Old School Orchard, will go and see
 Condition of paths between Allotments OK.
 Condition of Allotments OK.
 Cultivation
 Condition of Allotments not under cultivation OK.
 Litter None.
 Comments N/A.

• **Culverts on Mill Lane**

Litter and rubbish in and around Culverts Unable to gain access.
 Dog-fouling OK.
 Comments N/A.

• **Salt bins**

Perrywood Lane OK.
 Great Innings OK.
 Station Road OK.
 Moorymead Close OK.
 Hazeldell OK.
 Garages between Glebe Closer & Rectory Lane OK.

• **Dog-waste bins**

Footpath 17 OK.
 Sportsfield OK.
 Church Walk OK.
 Walkern Road OK.
 Station Road OK.
 High Street (by Memorial) OK.
 Great Innings OK.
 Mill Lane OK.

• **Multi-Purpose Play Area**

• **Sweeping of surface**

Mr. Poulton said that the MPPA needs sweeping on a regular basis. Christine Bewley has been asked if she would like to do this job, but has not yet given her response. If she does not wish to take on this task, then Mr. Vosper of the Tennis Club would consider taking on the job and be paid £5.25 per week.

• **Cycling**

It was agreed to purchase a no-cycling sign (similar to the dogs-on-lead sign purchased for the allotments) for the MPPA. **Action: J. Allsop**

• **Great Innings Play Area**

Refer to item 7 d, Correspondence received - EHDC - Great Innings Play Area (on page 10 of these minutes).

• **Allotments hedge**

Mr. Poulton said that he had now asked Mr. Smith of Old School Orchard to provide a quote to Stort Valley for cutting the Glebe Court hedge, which is obstructing the entrance to the allotments.

This item to remain on the agenda until complete.

Agenda: Env

6 Planning

a) Applications

i) 1 Moorymead Close

6 ft wooden extension along boundary line

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Stock discussed the plans prior to the meeting and instructed the Clerk to write to the Planning Department stating that the Parish Council had no comment on this application.

Parish Councillors agreed with the decision.

ii) Broom Hall Farm, Broom Hall

23.5m lattice tower, antennae, dishes and equipment cabin

Parish Councillors studied the plans for this application.

After lengthy discussion about the visual impact a 23.5m tower would have and the possibility of more towers being built in the near future a vote was taken. 7 Parish Councillors returned a vote of no comment. 2 Parish Councillors wished to object to the application.

The Clerk to inform EHDC that the Parish Council has no comment on this application. **Action: J. Allsop**

b) Appeals

i) 15 High Street

Erection of conservatory

Mr. and Mrs. Coggin have submitted an appeal against EHDC's decision to refuse planning permission for their application.

c) Decisions

i) Heath Mount Pre-Prep School, Woodhall Park

Single storey extensions to existing pre-prep

-EHDC permission refused.

d) Decisions

i) 64 Rivershill

Single storey rear extension and conservatory

-EHDC permission granted.

ii) 50 Great Innings

Single storey conservatory to rear of house

-EHDC permission granted

iii) 15 High Street

Erection of conservatory

-EHDC permission refused.

7 Correspondence received

a) Post Office – relocation of Post Office in village

Mr. Poulton read out the first two paragraphs of a letter (dated 19th September) from the Post office.

'I wrote to you on 30th July about our intention to relocate the above Post Office to 119-121 High Street, Wotton-at-Stone, Hertfordshire, SG14 3SB which is approximately 200 yards from its current location.

We have had no adverse comments received from our customers and other representative organisations.

We have, therefore, decided to proceed with the relocation.'

b) Claytons - Deed of Waiver on sportsfield

Claytons have written (letter dated 21st September) enclosing two copies of the Deed of Waiver for the sportsfield for signing. Also, notifying us of their charges of £392.50 for the costs involved (i.e. £100 for the consent to the lifting of the covenant, plus £250 and VAT for legal fees). Cled Fursland (Cricket Club) has been sent a copy of the letter asking him for a cheque to cover these costs (net of VAT).

Both copies of the Deed of Waiver have been signed by Mr. Poulton and Mr. Stock and witnessed by Mr. Meischke and the Clerk.

When the Cricket Club has confirmed that it will pay the legal fees, the Clerk to return the two copies of the Deed of Waiver and a cheque for £392.50. **Action: J. Allsop**

c) Mr. Abel Smith – Rabbits on Lammas

This item was discussed under item 5 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Lammas, Rabbit problem (on page 6 of these minutes).

d) EHDC - Great Innings Play Area

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter (dated 12th September) from Andrew Mills (Grounds Manager, EHDC).

‘Re – Great Innings Play Area

I refer to the above and your recent letter dated the 7th September 01 received by this department on 10th September 01.

Thank you for making your concerns known to me regarding the play area at Great Innings.

I have forwarded your comments to our Play Ground Inspector, Mr. Trevor Waldock for action. Mr. Waldock has already inspected the tiles adjacent to the slide with the manufacturer and is aware of the problems you describe. Both the manufacturer and Trevor have advised me the situation should be monitored with no immediate action necessary.

The concerns regarding graffiti and green paint have once again been forwarded to our contractor for action to remove or repaint the appropriate areas in the near future.

If you have any other further queries regarding this issue please do not hesitate to contact me at the above address.’

It was agreed to write to EHDC thanking them for their letter of the 12th September and to inform them that the Parish Council considers the safety surface to be a hazard and wants to know what condition does it need to get into before EHDC takes any action.

Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop

e) Mr. Rupert Gordon – Twinning with Ville de Saint-Cast Le Guildo

Mr. Poulton read out a letter (dated 13th September) from Mr. Gordon of Heath Mount School.

For the past 12 years Mr. Gordon has taken a group of children from Heath Mount School on many visits to Ville de Saint-Cast Le Guildo. He has written to the Ville de Saint-Cast Le Guildo council asking if it would be interested in a possible twinning with our village. They have responded with some interest.

Mr. Poulton said that some years ago the Parish Council had considered a possible twinning project, but rejected the idea. After discussion, it was agreed to thank Mr. Gordon for his suggestion and inform him that we do not wish to pursue the matter further.

Action: N. Poulton/J. Allsop

f) Mrs. Day – Seat on Hockerill

Mrs. Day (of 27 Hockerill) wrote on 10th September asking for the removal of the bench seat on the green near her bungalow. The seat has become a meeting point for gangs of youths who then leave it in a muddy condition and surrounded by litter. She said that the noise they generate when they are around is unbelievable and the damage they do whilst going to and from the seat can be awful.

Mr. Poulton said that the Parish Council replaced the original seat in March/April 2000 and set it in concrete. If it were removed the bench would almost certainly be destroyed.

Mr. Stock felt that Mrs. Day’s complaints were justified and that we should do all we can to help. With this in mind he suggested that the current police presence in the village be used to patrol the area and then we can review the situation again.

After discussion, it was agreed to write to PC Ivens asking him to arrange for his officers to patrol this area on a regular basis. We will then review the situation if problems continue to occur. Mrs. Day to be informed of the Parish Council’s actions.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

g) EHDC – Cultural Strategy

EHDC has invited the Parish Council to attend a Cultural Strategy Consultation Session on 12th October. EHDC will set out its policies and plans for action over the next three years in the area of Arts, Sport, Countryside Access, Museums and Heritage, Play, Parks, Health and Fitness provision, and Tourism. Mr. Poulton said that the strategy will influence the allocation of resources over the next three years and felt that it was important that the Parish Council send a representative. Because no other Parish Councillors were able to attend, Mr. Poulton will represent the Parish Council at this meeting.

Action: N. Poulton

The Clerk to notify EHDC accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

h) EHDC – Community Capital grants

This item was discussed under item 4 b, Playground equipment (on page 4 of these minutes).

i) Oliver Heald – re letter to Superintendent Terry Cox

Mr. Poulton read out a letter (dated 10th September) from Oliver Heald thanking us for copying him with our letter to Superintendent Terry Cox in which we formally complained about the lack of policing in the village.

Mr. Heald has taken this matter up immediately with Chief Superintendent Andy Wright, the Eastern Area Commander of the Hertfordshire Constabulary, and will contact the Parish Council again following discussions with him.

Hertfordshire Police have written (letter dated 7th September) to us stating that this matter has been passed on to the Inspector responsible for our area and that we will be contacted in the near future.

j) Mr. & Mrs. Collins – problems within the village

Mr. Poulton read out a letter (dated 2nd September) from Mr. and Mrs. Collins of 7 Rectory Lane regarding the many problems that Watton-at-Stone is experiencing with vandalism and yobbish behaviour. He then read out his response, which expressed the Parish Council's own concerns and actions.

k) SQ Environmental Trust – Annual Public meeting and review

SQ Environmental Trust (who grant aided £6,000 towards the MPPA re-surfacing project) has invited us to its 2nd Annual Public Meeting and Review on Wednesday 17th October.

Mr. Poulton said that he would be attending the meeting.

Action: N. Poulton

The Clerk to notify SQ Environmental Trust accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

l) EH Highways Partnership – surface dressing

Mr. Poulton read out the following (dated 21st September) from Ron Jack of the EH Highways Partnership.

'Thank you for your letter of 19th September 2001 concerning surface dressing.

I will investigate, but have to say there is very little the Highways Authority can do with this type of preparation.

The surface dressing was laid correctly and the damage would be very difficult to rectify.'

m) Thames Water – Concrete bollard on Lammas

This item was covered under item 5 a, Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee - Manhole cover in sportsfield (on page 6 of these minutes) and Environment Sub-Committee - Concrete fixture/cables on the Lammas (on page 7 of these minutes).

n) Dr. Norden - Watton-at-Stone to Datchworth Road and Datchworth to Woolmer Green Road

Dr. Norden has copied us with his correspondence with Oliver Heald MP regarding the condition of the Watton-at-Stone to Datchworth Road and Datchworth to Woolmer Green Road.

We have sent a letter (dated 27th September 2001) to Dr. Norden thanking him for the correspondence and informing him that Oliver Heald is holding a surgery at the Community Hall on Saturday 6th October between 11 o'clock and 12 noon.

o) Mrs. McCash

Mrs. McCash has written to thank the Parish Council for the get-well wishes and flowers sent to her.

Mr. Filer said that he had no problem with such gestures but suggested that in future it would be better if these were paid for by councillors making personal contributions. This was agreed by all present.

p) Hertfordshire Association for Local History

The Hertfordshire Association for Local History has written (letter dated 25th September) to thank the Parish Council for its donation of £50 towards producing the book called Community Life in Hertfordshire.

q) EHDC – Proposed expansion of Stansted Airport

Mr. Poulton said that EHDC had written (letter dated 31st September) asking for observations on their report objecting to the proposed expansion of Stansted.

Because Watton-at-Stone is not in the immediate locality of Stansted Airport, it was agreed not to respond to this letter.

8 Reports from other Organisations

• **Watton-at-Stone Conservation Society**

Mr. Stock said that a date has not yet been set for an Extraordinary General Meeting of the society.

• **Watton-at-Stone Meditation Garden**

Mrs. Davies said that the planting of the Meditation garden is now complete. It was agreed that the garden had vastly improved the visual impact of the Methodist Church.

The Methodist Church is holding a thanksgiving and dedication service on 21st October at the Meditation Garden to thank all those who kindly donated towards this project. Everyone is welcome to attend.

- **Watton-at-Stone Youth Club**

Mrs. Dinnin reported that the Youth Club has now been running successfully for four weeks.

A management committee has been formed and comprises:

Christine Dinnin as Chairperson

Janet Manuel as Secretary

Helen McCash as Treasurer.

Mrs. Davies said that one more person is required on the volunteer rota system to fulfil a duty once per month.

- **Watton-at-Stone Primary School**

Mr. Clark said that OFSTED recently carried-out a two-day visit to the school and had now produced an interim report and were pleased with the progress being made. The school will have to have another OFSTED inspection in one year's time.

Interviews for a new Headteacher will take place on 17th October.

- **Watton-at-Stone Sports & Social Club**

Mr. Meischke said that at the Sports & Social Club meeting held on 12th September the following elections were made.

Mr. Colin Straker – Chairman

Mr. Maurice Gordon – Vice-Chairman

Mr. Ian Knight – Secretary and Acting Treasurer (Mr. Knight said that he would fulfil the position of Treasurer until someone else puts their name forward to fill the position).

Mr. Meischke said that he had emphasised at the meeting on 12th September that the Parish Council's agreement is with the Sports & Social Club and not with their affiliated clubs. Therefore, all complaints from the affiliated clubs should be directed to the Sports & Social Club and not to the Parish Council.

The open day on the 19th September was a success and well attended. Particular interest was shown in the kick boxing demonstration.

The first edition of the Sports & Social Club newsletter had been distributed throughout the village.

9 Accounts/Correspondence

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash

Receipts

None

Payments

None

Cheques required

Diocesan Board	Allotment hire	90.00
Jane Allsop	Phone calls	26.99
M. Stanley	Work at Watton Green, the Lammas and the sportsfield	635.00
Sodexho	Football pitch line-marking	76.38
J. Allsop	October salary	473.20
J. Allsop	Flowers for Mrs. H. McCash	14.50
Inland Revenue	3 months Tax and NI	114.24
		<u>1430.31</u>

Cheques received

Mr. J. Love	Allotment hire 2001/2002	21.00
Mrs. Barnett	Allotment hire 2001/2002	10.50
Mr. Michael Inman	Allotment hire 2001/2002	21.00
Mr. D. Wolf	Allotment hire 2001/2002	3.50
Mr. & Mrs. Riddle	Allotment hire 2001/2002	7.00
Mr. J. Knight	Allotment hire 2001/2002	14.00
Mr. Ivan Beadle	Allotment hire 2001/2002	3.50
Mr. J B Bunyan	Allotment hire 2001/2002	3.50
Mr. Bob Beadle	Allotment hire 2001/2002	7.00
Mr. M Moore	Allotment hire 2001/2002	14.00

£105.00

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash

Receipts

Floodlighting to 21.03.01	60.05	Payments	
Peter Cox – Main Hall & Pavilion hire	52.00	NSPCC Diary 2002	2.00
Colin Straker – Main Hall hire	<u>56.00</u>	Argos – Kitchen set	<u>8.99</u>
	<u>168.05</u>		<u>10.99</u>

Cheques required

Business Gas	Gas supply charges	105.22
David Bunyan	Repairs to showers and outside ladies toilet	115.74
Mrs. C. Bewley	41½ hours cleaning work	217.88
		<u>438.84</u>

Cheques received

G. Pay	Main Hall hire – September to December 2001	439.20
Mrs. Charleston Astall	Pavilion hire	14.00
Mrs. Gilbey	Main Hall hire	50.00
Mrs. Pattle	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	<u>26.50</u>
		<u>465.70</u>

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

10 Chairman's / Clerk's Report

Mr. Poulton reported on the following item.

• **B. T. Ross – Application for full transfer of licence at the Waggon and Horses Public House**

B. T. Ross has written to us (letter dated 2nd October) enclosing a full transfer application together with a Section .34 (gaming machine permit) application in respect of the Waggon and Horses Public House.

Mrs. Sally Jane (Haldenby) Bond intends to apply to the licensing session to be held at Stevenage Court on 6th November 2001 for a transfer of licences. Myrtle Jeanette (Thacker) Oliver currently holds the licence.

• **The meeting closed at 9.45 pm.**

• **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 7th November 2001.**