

A meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council was held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 5th September 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	
Public:	Mr. E. Riddle	

Mr. Poulton said that due to her husband Murray being taken ill and problems relating to her own health, Mrs. McCash had resigned as Chairman of the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee, but wished to remain a Parish Councillor.

The Parish Council has sent Murray McCash flowers and wishes for a speedy recovery. Mr. Poulton then read out a thank you letter from Murray McCash.

Mr. Poulton said that he would be asking for nominations for the election of Chairman of the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee under item 4 a, Budget & Finance Sub-Committee (refer to page 4 of these minutes).

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. McCash.

2 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday on 25th July 2001**

Mr. Filer 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

- **Write to Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership) re confirmation of tree replacement in Hazeldell**

This action point has been completed.

Mr. Stock said that the two trees had now been planted. He is currently in discussion with Ron Jack about a third tree.

- **Send a copy of Stort Valley Housing Association letter to Mr. Lamb**

This action point has been completed.

- **Send letter in support of the Memorial Hall Management Committee's plans for refurbishing the toilets**

This action point has been completed.

- **Meet the Summer Play Scheme leaders to hand over the keys on Monday 30th July and carry-out weekly inspections of the building**

This action point has been completed.

- **Inform the Clerk in writing of the changes to her contract of employment**

This action point has been completed.

- **Contact Jeff Skidmore re strimming of the un-worked allotments**

This action point has been completed.

Mr. Meischke said that he had not inspected the allotments to see if the work had been carried-out. This item to remain on the agenda under Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee. **Agenda: R & A**

- **Contact Jono Meischke re changes required to the artwork for the Watton Green information board**

This action point has been completed.

- **Establish a method of mounting the artwork on the information board**

This action point is in progress.

- **Inform Don Chandler that we are to use his artwork**

This action point has been completed.

- **Give Mr. Stanley the key to the Lammas gate**

This action point has been completed.

- **Remove the metal protrusions from the sides of the two boot scrapers**

Mr. Meischke reported that the metal protrusions had been bent back by vandals. He will tidy these up to make them safe. **Action: J. Meischke**

Mr. Knight said that when leaving the MPPA in the dark there is the danger of tripping-up over the boot scraper. This problem would be alleviated by the installation of a post between the entrance to the MPPA and the boot scraper.

Mr. Knight agreed to arrange for the installation of the post when the path is being re-laid.

Action: I. Knight

- **Write 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 4 b i, Sportsfield – Report (on pages 7 and 8 of these minutes).
- **Write to EHDC re planning application for 64 Rivershill**
This action point has been completed.
- **Return completed CDA Rural Social Inclusion Project Survey**
This action point has been completed.
- **Return completed EHDC questionnaire on Best Value review of the EH Highways Partnership**
This action point has been completed.
- **Attend Hertfordshire Police Authority meeting in Aston**
Mr. Filer is to attend the Aston meeting on Monday 10th September and will report back to the Parish Council on the 3rd October 2001.
Action: D. Filer
- **Send donation of £50 to Hertfordshire Association for Local History**
This action point has been completed.
- **Send copy of Anglia Housing Group's letter to Mrs. Green**
This action point has been completed.
However, the work has still not been done. Refer to item 4 b i, Sportsfield – Report (on pages 7 and 8 of these minutes).
- **Write to Rural Development Officer at CDA Herts re Vital Village Grants package meetings**
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to the Church of England Legal Office re draft Deed of Waiver re the sportsfield**
This action point has been completed.
Refer to item 6 a, Correspondence received - The Church of England – Deed of Waiver re sportsfield (on page 9 of these minutes).
- **Write to EHDC re Area Forum**
This action point has been completed.
- **Give Mr. Meischke cheque for Doe Sport**
This action point has been completed.
- **Contact Doe Sport re surface of MPPA**
This item to be discussed under 4 a, Community Hall Trustees – Verbal report on meeting held on 4th September 2001 (on page 4 of these minutes).
- **Place EHDC letter re temporary changes in the Planning Duty Officer system on the notice boards and send a copy to the editor of the Parish Magazine**
This action point has been completed.
- **Complete and return Environmental Survey**
This action point has been completed.
- **Inspect Sports Hall floor again and take any action necessary**
This item to be discussed under 4 a, Community Hall Trustees – Verbal report on meeting held on 4th September 2001 (on page 5 of these minutes).
- **Investigate the possibility of replacing broken windows with polycarbonate instead of glass**
Mr. Meischke reported that polycarbonate would not be suitable for the lower windows at the Community Hall because this material is easily scratched and graffiti cannot be removed. However, the high-level window that was broken in the Main Hall has been replaced with polycarbonate.
- **Write to EH Highways Partnership re branch hanging over the road opposite Watton Nursery**
This action point has been completed and the branch has now been removed.
- **Write to Rumball Sedgwick re trees hanging over the road in Perrywood Lane**
This action point has been completed.
Refer to item 6 f, Rumball Sedgwick – trees in Glebe field adjacent to the Churchyard (on page 9 of these minutes).

- **Write to Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership) re damage to surface dressing in High Street and Station Road, and asking when the surface-dressing of roundabout areas is to take place**

This action point has been completed.

Mrs. Dinnin reported that the surface dressing in Beane Road has been damaged.

Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership) to be informed in writing.

Action: J. Allsop/D. Stock

- **Look for more comfortable seating for the Parish Council room**

Mr. Poulton said that new seating for the Parish Council room would cost a minimum of £250. An alternative option would be to purchase cushions for the existing seats at a fraction of this cost.

It was agreed to purchase cushions for the existing seats.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Holly Bush in gap in hedge**

Mr. Dunhill said that the small holly bush he planted at one side of the gap in the hedge is still there. He will continue to monitor the situation and if necessary arrange for a larger shrub to be planted to fill the gap.

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

3 Specific Items

a) Grass verges – monthly inspection

The grass verges are all in a reasonable condition and are due to be cut next week.

This item to remain on the agenda until the end of the 2001 grass-cutting season.

Agenda: 10/01

The flower bed outside Longmeadow is in a very poor condition and needs extra planting. It was agreed to write to Camstead Homes to ask if they could clean up and replant the flower bed outside Longmeadow now that the building work is almost complete.

Action: J. Allsop

b) Playground equipment

Mrs. Davies has submitted an application to EHDC for a grant of £6,250, which is equal to the amount already raised.

Mr. Poulton said that he would be attending an EHDC meeting on the 13th September during which our application will be decided. However, because he has a pecuniary interest in the application he would be asked to leave the meeting when the subject is discussed.

Mr. Poulton said that Mrs. Davies (as well as all other Parish Councillors) was welcome to attend the meeting.

This item to remain on the agenda.

Agenda: 10/01

c) Summer Play Scheme 2001

Mr. Meischke said that although the Summer Play Scheme was fraught with problems, they were not due to the organisers of the scheme. He therefore proposed that the EHDC deposit of £100 be returned and a letter of thanks be sent for running the 2001 Summer Play Scheme at the Community Hall, which Parish Councillors agreed was a great success and enjoyed by a lot of village children. Also, that we are sorry for all the problems that occurred whilst the Play Scheme was running and realise that this was no fault of the leaders.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Poulton then read out the following letter, which he proposed be sent to the Chief Superintendent.

'The Parish Council, following it's meeting last night wishes to make a formal complaint against the lack of policing in the village which has resulted in an increase in crime.

Examples of the problems, which have occurred in the village over the last few weeks, are as follows:

- Cricket table set alight.
- Roller on sportsfield pushed through the Multi Purpose Play Area fence.
- Stables set alight.
- Windows broken in the Community Hall.
- Apples and stones thrown at old age pensioners resulting in a window being broken.
- Car driven around Borlase bean field & overturned – driver/owner identified to Police
- Burning trees, fences and tyres on Watton Green.
- Rope tied around play equipment and stretched across main road.
- Leader of EHDC Play Scheme threatened resulting in the Play Scheme closing.
- Cars daubed with mud on car park.

- Community Hall covered in graffiti.
- Youth screaming on the sportsfield until 1 am and 2 am.
- Youths walking between the Wagon and Horses and Bull Public House causing a noise nuisance, throwing bottles, fighting and being a general nuisance to local residents.
- Weed killers sprayed on allotments and cabbages uprooted.

Names of some of the perpetrators have been handed to the Police but they still appear to strut around the village as though they are immune to prosecution.

At a meeting in July with PC Ivens and Inspector Shirley Godman our Chairman Nigel Poulton informed the officers that problems could arise during the Play Scheme. Extra Policing was promised by your officers but none were seen.

The Council frequently attends Police meetings where we are told that Hertfordshire has the lowest crime rate, but residents of Watton-at-Stone do not see it that way.

In order to allay further fears of our residents would you please indicate how many of the crimes reported over the last six weeks were investigated by your officers and what was the outcome? Would you also assure us that you are doing all in your power to stop these crimes and that more of your officers, perhaps supplemented by Special Constables, will be available for the rural areas.'

Mr. Filer said that only six police officers cover the whole of the East Herts Hertford Area, which in reality is reduced to an average of four because of holiday leave and sickness. He said that even if the letter is sent we do not stand a hope in hell of getting better police cover because the manpower just is not there.

Mr. Stock seconded the motion and all present were in favour. Copies of the letter to be sent to Mr. O. Heald (MP), Mr. B. Hammond (County Councillor) and Mr. D. Filer (Parish Councillor representative for the Police Authority).

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

Note: Subsequently, on the advice of Hertford Police Station, the above letter was addressed and sent to Superintendent Terry Cox at the Stevenage Police Station, who the Clerk was informed, is currently the most senior officer in charge of our area.

4 Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

Mr. Poulton asked for nominations for the election of Chairman of the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee.

Mr. Stock nominated Mr. Filer.

Mr. Knight seconded the motion and all present were in favour. Mr. Filer was duly elected.

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

- **Approval of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31st March 2001**

All Parish Councillors were given a copy of the audited accounts prior to today's meeting.

Mr. Filer asked for clarification on various points contained in the audited accounts. The Clerk gave explanations on some of the points. Mr. Filer to give the Parish Council full explanations during the Parish Council meeting on 3rd October 2001.

Mr. Filer proposed that the Parish Council approve the accounts and the Chairman and the Clerk (as Responsible Financial officer) sign the balance sheet. Mr. Knight seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Mr. Poulton and the Clerk to sign two copies of the balance sheet.

Action: N. Poulton/J. Allsop

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

Action: J. Allsop

- **Date of next meeting**

Mr. Filer will arrange a date for the next meeting of the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee.

Action: D. Filer

Community Hall Trustees

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

- **Verbal report on meeting held on 4th September 2001**

- **MPPA**

The problem with the slippery surface of the MPPA has now been resolved.

- **Additional Play equipment**

Refer to item 3 b, Specific Items - Playground equipment (on page 3 of these minutes).

Comment [C1]:

- **Vandalism**

The Community Hall, MPPA and sportsfield have been subjected to numerous acts of vandalism throughout the school summer holidays. These included extensive damage to windows (requiring seven to be replaced) and graffiti on the walls, setting light to the cricket pitch and pushing the large grass-roller down the slope into the MPPA causing damage to the kicker boards and fence supports. In addition, there was also vandalism in other areas of the village such as Watton Green.

The Community Hall Trustees recommendation to send a strong letter of complaint to the Chief Superintendent of the Hertfordshire Police Authority was agreed by the Parish Council under item 3 c, Specific Items - Summer Play Scheme 2001 (on pages 3 and 4 of these minutes).

- **Register check and annual return for year ended 31st March 2001 for Charity Commission**

Mr. Poulton proposed that the completed annual return forms, which have been checked by the Trustees be returned to the Charity Commission as requested. Mr. Filer seconded the motion and all present were in favour. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Security**

Options for improving security at the Community Hall were discussed by the Trustees. It was agreed to invite the Crime Prevention Officer at Hertford Police Station to attend the next meeting of the Community Hall Trustees on 11th December 2001. **Action: N. Poulton/J. Allsop**

- **Main Hall flooring**

Following the Parish Council meeting in July, Mr. Stock and Mr. Meischke inspected the playing surface in the Main Hall. Subsequently, Mr. Meischke spoke to Christine Bewley (the Cleaner) and agreed a course of action. Mr. Stock reported that although the condition of the flooring improved for a time, the problem is reoccurring. Mr. Meischke felt that the soft carpet-type brush that Mrs. Bewley is using to sweep the floor is acting as a polisher.

Mr. Meischke to speak with Mrs Bewley about the flooring and ask her to identify any cleaning tools or materials that she requires. **Action: J. Meischke**

- **Community Hall and sportsfield sign in High Street**

Mr. Meischke brought to the Trustees' attention that the new sign in the High Street pointing to the Community Hall is one-sided only and has been badly sited and is not very visible from the road.

Mr. Poulton agreed to speak to Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership) requesting that a new double-sided sign be ordered and sited with the existing toilet sign in the High Street. **Action: N. Poulton**

- **Seats on sportsfield**

The seat recently installed by Mrs. Freeman, which is being donated to the Parish Council (refer to item 6 n, Debra Freeman – seat on sportsfield, on page 10 of these minutes), requires additional brackets to secure it to the ground.

It was agreed to fit the additional brackets as required. **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**

This item was discussed under 2 b, Review of Actions - Contact Jeff Skidmore re strimming of the un-worked allotments (on page 1 of these minutes).

- **Compost bins for allotments**

One of the best ways to get rid of rubbish on the allotments is to burn it. Mr. Poulton said that there is no formal agreement between the allotment holders and the Parish Council, and provided common sense is used, allotment holders could have bonfires on their allotment. This was agreed by all.

- **Weed-killer on allotments**

One of the allotment holders left a spray container of weed killer on their allotment. Vandals then used the spray on several allotments, causing damage to crops. Allotment holders must not leave equipment on-site that could then be used to cause damage to that or other allotments.

- **Manhole cover in sportsfield**

Mr. Poulton said that whilst writing to Thames Water concerning the concrete fixture/cables on the Lammas he asked them to inspect two manhole covers on the sportsfield. These are badly corroded and likely to collapse in the near future.

This item to remain on the agenda under Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee until the matter has been resolved. **Agenda: R & A**

Environment

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

- **Watton Green**

- **Vandalism**

Watton Green has been subjected to vandalism over the school summer holidays. This included tyres been burnt (causing substantial damage to the grassland and some trees), branches ripped from trees, the access fence/gate to Watton Green torn down and burnt. These incidents have been reported to the Police.

Mr. Stock said that he contacted various Parish Councillors to get agreement for the fence/gate to be repaired by Michael Stanley at a price of £50.

- **Byelaws**

Mr. Stock said that it had been suggested to Mr. Filer, during a discussion with a police officer, that a byelaw prohibiting fires on Watton Green would help them to prosecute offenders. Mr. Stock therefore proposed that we introduce such a byelaw for Watton Green and also for the Lammas.

Parish Councillors discussed the matter and some felt that extended byelaws (e.g. similar to those for the sportsfield) should be applied to Watton Green and the Lammas.

It was agreed that the Clerk obtain information on byelaws and the matter be discussed again at the Parish Council meeting on 3rd October.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

This item to remain on the agenda, under Environment Sub-Committee, until the matter has been resolved.

Agenda: Env.

- **Lammas**

Mr. Dunhill reported on the following items concerning the Lammas.

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

Mr. Poulton said that Thames Water wrote on 13th August informing us that their engineer (Nigel Fuller) had attempted to contact him by telephone, without success. They asked to be provided with further details, including a map of the exact location of the concrete bollard.

Mr. Poulton said that he had written to Thames Water on 3rd September enclosing a map showing where the concrete bollard is situated.

- **Replacement hedging**

Mr. Dunhill said that now autumn is approaching, the additional shrubs required to replace the 2 to 3 metres of hedging that has died need purchasing and planting. He agreed to contact Tony Bradford to arrange for the purchase of the plants and will then organise a planting date.

Action: V. Dunhill

Michael Stanley who cut the Lammas grass in July has still not been removed the cuttings and deposited them on site in the agreed area.

It was agreed to write to Mr. Stanley stating that, as he is aware, the management of the Lammas grass-cutting is set out under a MAFF Stewardship Scheme, which requires us to remove all grass cuttings; with a special dispensation that they be deposited on-site in an agreed area. Because the Lammas is due to be inspected by the Stewardship Scheme in the very near future, we ask him to remove the cuttings as soon as possible.

Action: V. Dunhill/J. Allsop

Tree planting on Lammas to be placed on the October agenda, under Environment Sub-Committee.

Agenda. Env.

b) Sportsfield

i) Report

Mr. Stock carried-out the sportsfield report on the 3rd September, the result of which is as follows.

- **Sportsfield:**

Condition of grass	OK.
Litter	OK.
Dog-waste bin and fouling	OK.
Netball posts	OK.
General	Good overall. Gap in Church Walk hedge needs cutting back.

- **Children's Playground:**

Condition of surface	OK.
Litter/Litter bin	OK, bin in use.
Large swings	OK.

Small swings	OK.
See-Saw	Still squeaks.
Slide	OK.
Comments	-
• Community Hall:	
General Condition	OK.
Litter bin	OK, in use.
Car Park	OK.
General	OK.
• Multi-Purpose Play Area:	
Surface	OK.
Boundary Fencing	OK, but needs attention (as noted and agreed previously).
Tennis nets	Up and OK.
Litter	OK.
General	Some debris from oak tree on the surface of the MPPA.
• Great Innings Play Area:	
Equipment	OK, apart from graffiti on new slide.
Surfaces	Some tiles separating on slope of large slide.
Litter	OK.
Dog-waste bin and fouling	OK.
Comments	Good overall.
• Allotments Area:	
Access	Glebe Court hedge needs cutting back.
Condition of paths between Allotments	OK.
Condition of Allotments	OK.
Cultivation	
Condition of Allotments not under cultivation	OK.
Litter	OK.
Comments	Was approached re need for two large compost areas.
• Culverts on Mill Lane	
Litter and rubbish in and around Culverts	No access.
Dog-fouling	OK.
Comments	-
• Salt bins	
Perrywood Lane	OK, $\frac{2}{3}$ full.
Great Innings	OK, $\frac{1}{3}$ full.
Station Road	OK, $\frac{1}{2}$ full.
Moorymead Close	Both OK, and $\frac{2}{3}$ full.
Hazeldell	OK (apart from lid), $\frac{1}{2}$ full.
Garages between Glebe Closer & Rectory Lane	OK, $\frac{2}{3}$ full.
• 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.
General Comments:	-
• Gap in Church Walk hedge	
Mr. Poulton said that the sportsfield hedge cutting is due to be carried-out in October and the gap will be cut back at this time. Mr. Whitehead has agreed to do the work for £300, which is the same price he charged last year. It was agreed that Mr. Poulton instruct Mr. Whitehead to carry-out the work.	

Action: N. Poulton

- **Great Innings Play Area**

Mr. Poulton said that EHDC had written (letter dated 31st July) in response to our letter concerning the Great Innings Play Area, to inform us that Trevor Waldock would be making a site inspection of the area and would organise the appropriate repairs.

It was agreed to write again to EHDC informing them that there is still graffiti on the new equipment. Also, that there is still a problem with the safety-surface tiles for the slide, which Parish Councillors believe is due to a design or installation fault and not vandalism.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Glebe Court hedge**

It was agreed to write again to Stort Valley Housing Association asking them to cut-back the hedge as a matter of urgency.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Football goal-mouths on sportsfield**

Mr. Meischke said that the Football Club failed to re-seed/re-turf the goal-mouths following the end of the football season. It is now too late for this work to be carried-out. Mr. Knight said that the Sports and Social Club were aware of the situation.

It was agreed to write a letter to the Sports & Social Club reminding them of their responsibility and asking them to ensure that this does not happen again.

Action: J. Allsop

5 Planning

a) Applications

i) 11 Glebe Close

Two storey rear extension

Mr. Stock said that he had visited the residents of one of the neighbouring properties. Although visiting the other neighbouring property three times he was unable to speak to anyone. Because no objections were raised and the application was in keeping with similar improvements to one of the adjacent properties, Mr. Stock had 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) Amenity Land, Motts Close

Change of use of amenity land to private gardens

Mrs. Davies signed the member's interest book, as a resident of Motts Close, and then left the meeting. Parish Councillors viewed the plans for this application. Mr. Poulton said that this change of use does not affect anyone other than the residents of Motts Close and the land in question is not accessible to members of the public.

It was agreed to write to EHDC informing them that the Parish Council has no comment on this application.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Davies returned to the meeting.

iii) Watton-at-Stone Memorial Hall, 118 High Street

Minor infill to produce new storeroom

Parish Councillors viewed the plans for this application.

Mr. Stock proposed that because of the problems necessitating this infill we should write stating our support for the application. Mr. Meischke seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

b) 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

6 Correspondence received

a) The Church of England – Deed of Waiver re sportsfield

The Parish Council wrote to the Church of England Legal Office advising them of the error in the map attached to the Deed of Waiver and asked them to amend it.

Mr. Stock said that another version was then submitted to the Parish Council, which still did not identify the land correctly.

Mr. Dunhill said that the map would be better defined if the boundary of the sportsfield was marked in yellow and the deed amended to refer to it accordingly.

Parish Councillors unanimously agreed that they were satisfied with the draft deed of waiver provided that the sportsfield is marked as suggested by Mr. Dunhill.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

b) RoSPA Playground inspection

EHDC has written to advise us that RoSPA will be carrying out its annual inspection of the play equipment at the sportsfield on one of the following dates.

Tuesday 9th October

Wednesday 10th October

Thursday 11th October

Mr. Meischke said that it was important that a member of the Parish Council is present during the inspection, so that problem areas highlighted in last years report can be discussed.

The Clerk to contact Andrew Mills to find out which day RoSPA will be visiting Watton-at-Stone.

Action: J. Allsop

c) Thames Water – Concrete bollard on Lammas Meadow

This item was discussed under item 4 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Concrete fixture/cables on the Lammas (on page 6 of these minutes).

d) Mrs. Green – hedge at Glebe Court

Mrs. Green has written to the Parish Council thanking them for contacting the owners of the hedge so promptly. However, the hedge has still not been cut back. Refer to item 4 b, Sportsfield – report (on page 7 of these minutes).

e) Emjay Agency Limited – cancellation of hearing for the transfer of licences at Waggon and Horses public house

This application for the transfer of license at the Waggon and Horses public house has been withdrawn.

f) Rumball Sedgwick – trees in Glebe field adjacent to the Churchyard

Rumball Sedgwick has written (letter dated 31st July) giving us permission for the two dead trees in the Glebe field adjacent to the Churchyard to be removed by Mr. Borlase of Perrywood Farm. A copy of Rumball Sedgwick's letter has been sent to M. Borlase.

Mr. Filer to ask Mr. Borlase if the trees have now been removed.

Action: D. Filer

g) Camstead Homes- donation toward play equipment

Camstead Homes has written (letter dated 23rd July) enclosing their donation of £250 towards the play equipment to be installed by the Parish Council.

h) EHDC – Great Innings Play Area

This item was discussed under item 4 b, Sportsfield – Report (on page 7 of these minutes).

i) EH Highways Partnership – Surface dressing

The following letter (dated 31st July) was received from Ron Jack of EH Highways Partnership.

'Thank you for your letter dated the 26th July concerning surface dressing.

I will inspect the sites you mention and take any necessary action.

As to the roundabouts, surface dressing is not suitable for this type of location, at the present moment there are no plans to carry out any works on the roundabouts.'

j) EH Highways Partnership – Highway Matters

Ron Jack has written (letter dated 31st July) regarding the tree problems in the village.

1. Branch overhanging Ware Road opposite Watton Nursery – this has now been removed.
2. Removal of Diocesan trees overhanging Perrywood Lane – EH Highways has no objection to the trees being removed.

3. Replacement of trees in Hazeldell – refer to item 2 b, Review of actions - Write to Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership) re confirmation of tree replacement in Hazeldell (on page 1 of these minutes).

k) DEFRA – Compliance problems with Countryside Stewardship Agreements

Mr. Poulton asked Mr. Dunhill to read the DEFRA document and complete the necessary forms.

Action: V. Dunhill

l) Audit Commission – A new approach to local council audit

Mr. Poulton asked Mr. Filer (as Chairman of the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee) to read this document and report back to the Parish Council.

Action: D. Filer

m) Watton Town Council, Norfolk

Mr. Poulton said that he had been contacted by the Chairman of Watton Town Council and had subsequently taken part in a 30-minute radio broadcast to discuss the differences in the two Wattons. Mr. Poulton said that he had sent Watton Town Council information on Watton-at-Stone and had subsequently received leaflets and information from them. These to be placed on circulation.

Action: J. Allsop

n) Debra Freeman – seat on sportsfield

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter from Debra Freeman of 10 Rivershill (dated 17th August 2001).

‘Now that the bench seat dedicated to my grandparents has been installed on the sportsfield, I would like to donate it to the Parish Council.

To protect it, I would very much appreciate it if you could arrange for the seat to be added to the list of similar items covered by the Parish Council’s insurance.

Once again, I thank the Parish Council for agreeing to the seat being sited at a location much loved by my grandparents.’

Mr. Poulton proposed that a letter of thanks be sent to Debra Freeman. Mr. Stock seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: N. Poulton

o) Ian Vosper (Tennis Club)

Mr. Poulton said that upon his return from holiday he opened the following letter (dated 24th July) from Ian Vosper.

‘I am writing to inform you that the Tennis Club intends to run some Tennis Camps between Wednesday 8th August and Thursday 16th August on the Multi-purpose play area.’

Mr. Knight was asked if the Tennis Club charged for the Tennis Camps. Mr. Knight confirmed that they did and that they pay Mr. Vosper to act as the Tennis Club coach.

Public money is used to provide and maintain the MPPA as a free-of-charge facility for the village. Parish Councillors discussed the issue of this public facility being used for personal financial gain. It was agreed that this was wrong and that individuals charging for coaching during public open-times (not Sports & Social Club agreed usage times) should pay for the use to the MPPA facilities.

This item to be discussed at the next meeting of the Community Hall Trustees.

Agenda: CH

p) EHDC – Standards Committee

EHDC has written (letter dated 28th August) inviting us to nominate, before 1st October 2001, one member of the Parish Council to service on the Standards Committee. No Parish Councillors present at the meeting put their name forward.

7 Reports from other Organisations

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

Mr. Stock reported that, for personal reasons, Mr. and Mrs. Gilbey (currently Chairman and Secretary) no longer wish to continue as members of the Conservation Society. Mr. Stock said that Mr. Gilbey is to arrange for an extraordinary general meeting of the Society (date to be established) to discuss its future. Mr. Gilbey has already asked Mr. Stock if the Parish Council would, in event that Conservation Society ceases to exist, hold its funds. Mr. Stock said that he was sure that the Parish Council would be prepared to hold the funds in the hope that the Conservation Society would be re-established at some time in the future. This was agreed by Parish Councillors. Mr. Stock to notify the Conservation Society accordingly.

Action: D. Stock

• **Watton-at-Stone Primary School**

Mr. Clark said that the school is to advertise for a new Headteacher next week.

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

Mr. Knight said that the Sports & Social Club has published the first edition of a newsletter. This is being distributed to all households in the village.

The next meetings of the Sports & Social Club will be held on 12th and 19th September (the 19th is to be an open evening).

• **Watton-at-Stone Memorial Hall Committee**

Mrs. Dinnin reported that a meeting of the Memorial Hall Committee was held on 3rd September.

Quotations for the refurbishment of the toilets have been received and a grant application had now been submitted to EHDC.

During its meeting concerns were raised about the re-opening of the Youth Club and the general behaviour of children, and the police reaction to it.

The committee is looking to find a new Trustee to replace Ted Shippin.

• **Watton-at-Stone Youth Club**

A recent meeting of the Youth Club Committee was attended by Tony Hunt (Youth Training Service Officer) and Roger Ingles. The main aim of the meeting was to prepare for the re-opening of the Youth Club next week. Sarah Davies was disappointed that a few of the parent volunteers had dropped out of the club rota.

The next meeting will be held on 1st October to discuss progress.

8 Accounts/Correspondence

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash

Receipts

None

Payments

50 Stamps

13.50

13.50

Cheques required

Sodexo	Grass cut 2001		349.96
Jane Allsop	July salary		473.20
HCC	Dogs on lead sign		12.36
Jane Allsop	Mercury paper		9.10
D R Monk	Flower beds in High Street		85.00
Herts. Assoc. for Local History	Donation		50.00
Don Chandler	32 hours litterpicking		160.00
J. Allsop	September salary	473.20	
	Flowers for M McCash	10.58	
	Phone charges	25.09	
			<u>508.87</u>
			<u>1648.49</u>

Cheques received

None

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash

Receipts

None

Payments

None

Cheques required

Mrs. C. Bewley	8 hours work		42.00
Eastern Energy			102.65
HCC	Cleaning materials		93.53
Stevenage Glass	Replace broken windows		581.92
Mrs. C. Bewley	42 hours		220.50
Don Chandler	5 hours		25.00
EHDC	Return of summer Play Scheme deposit		<u>100.00</u>
			<u>1165.6</u>

Cheques received

Camstead Homes	Donation towards play equipment		250.00
EHDC	Final grant payment for MPPA resurfacing project		55.05
Mrs. Gilbey	Main Hall hire		55.00
EHDC	Summer Play Scheme deposit		<u>100.00</u>
			<u>460.05</u>

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

9 Chairman's / Clerk's Report

Mr. Poulton reported on the following items.

- **Wotton Post Office**

Mr. Poulton said that Wotton Post Office is planning to move from its current site at 130 High Street to Mr. Summan's property at 121 High Street.

Bob Thurlow has asked if the Parish Council would write in support of his application to move the post office.

After lengthy discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council would support the application for the following reasons.

- More central location, which would encourage the existing commercial activities adjacent to this site.
- Better customer access.
- More suitable premises to allow future development of post office activities (e.g. internet access, cash-point).

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Neighbourhood Watch meeting**

Mr. Poulton reminded Parish Councillors that he had arranged a meeting for the 11th September in the Community Hall to look at restarting the neighbourhood watch scheme in the village. PC John Ivens and Jill Dockley (Community Safety Co-ordinator) will be present at the meeting. He urged as many Parish Councillors as possible to attend the meeting.

- **Meditation Garden**

The Methodist Church are holding an open day on 21st October at their new Meditation garden to thank all those who kindly donated towards this project.

- **The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.**

- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 3rd October 2001.**