

A meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council was held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 10th April 2002 at 7.00 p.m.

Present:	Mr. N. Poulton (Chairman)	Mr. D. Stock (Vice-Chairman)
	Mr. C. Clark (after 7.27 pm)	Mrs. S. Davies (until 9.00 pm)
	Mrs. C. Dinnin	Mr. V. Dunhill
	Mr. D. Filer	Mr. I. Knight
	Mrs. H. McCash	

Members of Public:	Mr. Riddle,	Mr. J. Skidmore
	Mr. C. Ball (advisor to Mr. J. Skidmore)	

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Meischke.

2 Presentation by Jeremy Peter, Beechwood Homes on Perrywood Lane

Parish Councillors went into the Pavilion to listen to a presentation from Beechwood Homes.

Beechwood Homes presented their draft plans for the development of the yard at Perrywood Lane. The plans comprise two, six-bedroom executive homes with garaging and landscaping of the site. Various aspects of the development were discussed. If built, the properties would be priced in the region of 1 million pounds each.

Mr. Poulton said that Parish Councillors can comment when we receive the official planning application from EHDC. Beechwood Homes hope to submit their plans to EHDC in about two weeks time.

3 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

• **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 6th March 2002**

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

• **Inspect dog-waste bin on Walkern Road and if broken notify EHDC**

This action point has been completed.

• **Prepare instructions on how to use the lock to the external door adjacent to the car park**

This action point is outstanding.

Action: J. Meischke

• **On completion of the above action point enclose these instructions with the Community Hall hire agreement**

This action point cannot be progressed until the above action point has been completed. **Action: J. Allsop**

• **Give Mr. Knight the telephone number of the Clerk of Digswell Parish Council**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 5 a, Community Hall Trustees – Use of MPPA (on pages 5 and 6 of these minutes).

• **Ask Mr. Bunyan to look at the shower pressure and the heating in the Community Hall**

Mr. Poulton said that Mr. Bunyan has now repaired the heating system and looked at the showers.

• **Pay Wicksteed Leisure's invoice for new play equipment**

This action point has been completed.

• **Photocopy Village Directory and give to Watton-at-Stone PCC for distribution**

This action point has been completed.

• **Advertise revised Parish Council meeting dates in the Parish News and on the Parish Council notice boards**

This action point has been completed.

• **Get the draft byelaws for Watton Green & the Lammas confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Environment**

This item to be discussed under 5 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Byelaws - Watton Green and the Lammas (on page 6 of these minutes).

• **Speak to Tony Bradford about the need for any tree surgery on the Lammas**

Mr. Dunhill said that this action point was still outstanding.

Action: V. Dunhill

- **Ask the Countryside Management Service to inspect the Parish Council land at the rear of Rivershill**
Mr. Dunhill said that he had contacted the Countryside Management Service and they hope to inspect the land soon.
Mr. Dunhill will report on this item at the next Parish Council meeting. **Action: V. Dunhill**
 - **Accept Herts Tree Care's quotation for work to Oak tree in School Lane**
This action point has been completed.
 - **Ask Derek Monk to tidy High Street flowerbed adjacent to flats at Willowdene**
Mr. Poulton said that Mr. Monk had completed the work.
 - **Ask Derek Monk to clear leaves in south-west drainage channel of MPPA**
Mr. Poulton said that Mr. Monk had completed the work.
 - **Ask EHDC to inspect the hollow at the entrance of Great Innings Play Area and take appropriate action**
Mr. Poulton said that EHDC has laid matting at the entrance of the Great Innings Play Area. Mrs. Davies said that the matting worked very well and it was now easy to manoeuvre a pushchair through the entrance.
 - **Draft a letter to be sent to all allotment holders concerning the compost bins**
Mr. Poulton said that he had spoken to some of the allotment holders (and in particular to the main complainant) concerning the one-off emptying of the compost bins. EHDC has not yet emptied the compost bins. Mr. Poulton said that when EHDC inform him of the cost incurred in emptying the bins, he would draft a letter to be sent to all allotment holders accordingly. **Action: N. Poulton**
 - **Obtain quotations for fencing unused area of allotments**
This action point has been completed.
Mr. Stock said that he and Mr. Poulton met on-site with a fencing contractor who subsequently submitted a quotation of £600 (plus VAT) to supply and install rabbit fencing on the allotments.
- Mr. Clark arrived at the meeting.
- Mr. Poulton said that the Parish Council had three options.
1. Do nothing.
 2. Install rabbit fencing between the used and disused parts of the allotments.
 3. Clear the land, thus removing all shrubbery and brambles.
- It was agreed that this item should be discussed together with the rabbit problem on the Lammas. Refer to item 5 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Rabbit problem on Lammas (on pages 6, 7 and 8 of these minutes).
- **Write to EHDC re planning application for 4 Old School Orchard**
This action point has been completed.
 - **Write to EHDC re planning application for 69-71 High Street**
This action point has been completed.
 - **Write to EHDC re planning application for 128 Hazeldell**
This action point has been completed.
 - **Write to EHDC re planning application for 122 High Street**
This action point has been completed.
 - **Write to EHDC re notification of planning appeal for 24 Rivershill**
This action point has been completed.
 - **Issue bus permits in the Community Hall on Saturday 23rd March**
Mr. Poulton reported that approximately 100 bus permits were issued on the day.
 - **Write to Hertfordshire Police Authority re launch of Hertfordshire's Policing Plan 2002/03**
This action point has been completed.
 - **Write to Rodney Ranzetta re use of Community Hall facilities for Community Service on 7th July**
This action point has been completed.
 - **Inform Football and Cricket clubs about Community Hall Service**
This action point has been completed.
 - **Try to attend DEFRA – Countryside Stewardship Open Meeting**
Mr. Poulton said that he had been unable to attend the DEFRA meeting because it coincided with a meeting at EHDC.

- **Write to Keith Bewley re Ornate Village Sign**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 7 b, Correspondence received - Letter from Watton Fayre (on page 10 of these minutes).

- **Reply to Mr. Northcott e-mail concerning leaf clearance at the southern-end of the village**

This action point has been completed.

- **Enrol on ‘Working with your Council’ training course**

This action point has been completed.

c) Action points outstanding for more than two months

- **Visit the Clerk to update the virus detector and resolve some problems associated with the e-mail software**

Mr. Clark said that this action point was still outstanding.

Action: C. Clark

- **Review the wording of the Community Hall hire agreement re the security aspects of the building**

Mr. Stock said that he and Mr. Meischke had reviewed the wording on the Community Hall hire agreement and modified it accordingly.

Mr. Stock said that the Clerk had noted that, in clause 3 the agreement stated that ‘Keys must not, under any circumstances, be passed to other persons or organisations.’ However, this does happened in the case in the case of the Rosie Conley franchise. It was agreed to change the wording on clause 3 to read ‘keys must not be passed to other persons or organisations without the written consent of the Parish Council.

- **Obtain quotes for fencing on Lammas**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 5 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Rabbit problem on Lammas (on pages 6, 7 and 8 of these minutes).

- **Contact HCC re their land adjacent to the by-pass and inform them of rabbit problem in the area**

Because Mr. Abel Smith has already contacted HCC re the subject, this action point is now deleted.

- **Inspect the rubbish in the top corner of the allotments (nearest Church)**

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke were unable to find any rubbish at the top corner of the allotments.

- **Draft the Parish Council’s responses to HCC’s documents concerning schooling and school transportation**

Mr. Clark said that this action point was still outstanding.

Action: C. Clark

- **Ask the School to contact EHDC’s dog-warden (Mike Abbey) direct re dog-fouling problems**

Mr. Clark said that this action point was still outstanding.

Action: C. Clark

Mr. Poulton asked Parish Councillors if they had any objection to item 6 a, ii and iii being discussed now. No objections were raised.

6 Planning

a) Applications

ii) Whempstead Lane

Dwelling house

iii) Whempstead Lane

Agricultural barn

Alteration and resubmission of existing application

The above two items were discussed together.

Mr. Poulton said that the application for a dwelling house was identical to that submitted in May 2001. However, the barn has been increased in size.

The applicant, Mr. Jeff Skidmore, said that the barn was 25% larger than on the plans submitted in May 2001. The height and width of the barn remains the same but the overall length has been increased from three bays to four bays.

Mr. Poulton read out our letter to EHDC dated 31st May 2001 concerning the original application that was withdrawn. He then read out a letter (dated 8th April) from Mr. Skidmore.

Because, one or more of his son’s is/are employed by Mr. Skidmore, Mr. Clark signed the member’s interest book and left the meeting.

Dave Standen of HCC wrote on the 27th March concerning the original application and gave no objections on highways issues.

Mr. Poulton read out a list of recorded accidents along Whempstead Lane over the past 10 years. The three accidents, which occurred between 1992 and 1998, were all minor and involved 18 and 19 year old drivers.

Mr. Filer said that the proposed dwelling was a nice looking and appropriate property for the site.

Mr. Skidmore said that the three tractors to be stored in the barn are the same ones that he kept at Chapel Farm until the end of 2001, so that actual road usage would remain the same.

Mr. Skidmore was asked about the proposed bed and breakfast business and the need for such a large property.

Mr. Skidmore said that he and his wife had run a bed and breakfast business at Chapel Farm for the past five years. The main use of the bed and breakfast facilities have been by business people coming to the area on a weekly basis. However, in the new property, he intends to use the disabled facilities on the ground floor for his disabled brother.

Mr. Poulton pointed-out to Parish Councillors that the application was on a green field site.

Mr. Knight said that in his opinion this was an appropriate use of the land and we should support the application. Mrs. Davies agreed with Mr. Knight's comments.

Mr. Filer proposed that the Parish Council write to EHDC stating it has no objections to the above applications. Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Clark returned to the meeting.

Mr. J. Skidmore, plus one other member of public left the meeting.

4 Specific Items

a) Playground equipment

Mr. Poulton said that Wicksteed Leisure had acknowledged receipt of our order for the installation of safety-grass, three bike-ramps and one shelter (all of which are being funded from the Community Against Drugs Fund).

Mr. Poulton asked the Clerk to contact Wicksteed Leisure to find out when they will be installing the equipment.

Action: J. Allsop

b) Presentations at 2002 Inter Parish Conference

Mr. Knight said that during the Parish Council meeting in March had expressed dissatisfaction about some of the speakers at the 2002 Inter Parish Conference. Other Parish Councillors were in agreement with his comments.

Mr. Knight said that the EH Highways Partnership speaker had been a little bit flippant about the road surfacing problems. Surely the correct policy is to install good drainage before repairing the road surfaces. If this is not done and the drainage remains poor, then the repaired surface will only break-up again. Mr. Poulton said that EH Highways Partnership has been short of funds, however both the Datchworth Road to Watton and the Whempstead Road from the A602 have recently had new drainage systems installed.

Mr. Poulton said that the EH Highways Partnership's budget for 2001/2002 only allocated money for A-roads. However, they had changed their policy for 2002/2003 and money will be allocated for B-roads as well as A-roads.

Mr. Knight then expressed his dissatisfaction about the EHDC Planning speaker who admitted that as a department, they did not look into issues such as sewage and drainage. Mr. Poulton said that the planning department cannot be master of all things and had to rely on the investigations of other departments and organisations so ensure that such matters are addressed when assessing planning applications.

c) Barrier on footpath leading to Church Lane

Mr. Dunhill had nothing to report on this item. Mr. Poulton said that this item needed to be resolved as soon as possible because people using wheelchairs cannot exit the footpath at Church Lane.

Mr. Dunhill to chase and resolve the matter.

Action: V. Dunhill

d) Model Code of Conduct

All Parish Councillors were given a copy of the draft Model Code of Conduct for Town and Parish Councils prior to this meeting. After discussion, Mr. Filer proposed that the Parish Council adopt the Model Code of Conduct with one alteration. In Part 1, clause 6, a final sentence to be added to the clause, which reads as follows.

“This should only be done after consultation with the member involved.”

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

The Clerk to notify the Standards Board for England accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

The Clerk to write to EHDC asking them to arrange to advertise, on our behalf, that the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council has adopted the code of conduct with one amendment and that copies of the code are available from the council offices.

Action: J. Allsop

5 Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

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

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

Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors were given a copy of the statement of accounts for the year ending the 31st March 2002.

Mr. Filer went through various items concerning the statements.

Note: Following the meeting, the Community Hall's six-monthly statement for its 14-day account was received. The statement showed that the account had earned interest of £36.40 to the 5th October 2001.

A copy of the amended accounts to be given to all Parish Councillors.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Audit of the Parish Council accounts for the year ending 31st March 2002**

Mr. Filer said that the audit requirements for the Parish Council accounts had now been changed and will be much simplified. The audit fee will therefore be £120 for the year ended 31st March 2002, provided that no extra work is involved by the auditors in passing our accounts. The Audit Commissions have appointed Lubbock Fine as the auditors for East Hertfordshire.

Because the exact requirements have not been confirmed, the Clerk will wait to hear from the auditors before she finalizes the accounts.

- **Audit of the Community Hall accounts for the year ending 31st March 2002**

Mr. Filer proposed that McCash and Hay be instructed to audit the Community Hall accounts. Mr. Poulton seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Insurance policies**

Mr. Filer said that he had gone through the Parish Council insurance policy with the Clerk and asked her to check the replacement values of various items.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Filer and the Clerk to do the same for the Community Hall insurance policy.

Action: J. Allsop

Community Hall Trustees

- **Acceptance of minutes of meeting held on 12th December 2001**

Mr. Poulton proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed as a true record. Mr. Knight seconded the motion.

- **Report and acceptance of minutes of meeting held on 12th March 2002**

The following amendment was made to the minutes of the Community Hall Trustees meeting held on the 12th April 2002.

- Page 2, Item 5, Any other business - Boundary fence adjacent to Cricket Pitch

'Mr. Meischke said that he will arrange to meet with Martin Tipper (from Watton-at-Stone Cricket Club) re concerns over the effectiveness of boundary fence which is in place to stop balls from going onto School Lane and endangering passing pedestrians and vehicles.'

Should read:

'Mr. Meischke said that he will arrange to meet with Martin Tipper (from Watton-at-Stone Cricket Club) re concerns over the effectiveness of boundary fence which is in place to stop balls from going onto School Lane.'

Mr. Filer said that he was not happy with the final paragraph of item 3, Matters Arising.

'It was suggested that all Parish Councillors who wish to charge hirers receiving tennis coaching come up with strategy for charging and be personally involved in policing the situation.'

Parish Councillors were not happy with the above minute and agreed that when the Parish Council agrees a course action it is a corporate decision and responsibility does not fall on an individual.

Mr. Poulton proposed that the minutes as amended be accepted and signed as a true record. Mr. Knight seconded the motion.

- **Use of MPPA**

Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors were given a copy of information that Mr. Knight had obtained from other Tennis facilities in the surrounding area.

Comment [C1]:

Some Parish Councillors still felt very strongly that it was wrong to use a free facility for personal financial gain and that such users should pay for the MPPA facilities. Parish Councillors were reminded that the MPPA is a facility that is open to all residents of Watton-at-Stone and the surrounding areas (except at the priority times assigned to the Watton-at-Stone Tennis Club). However, after discussion, it was agreed that it would be impossible to monitor the situation.

- **Broken window**

Mr. Poulton reported that the small window above the entrance to the Community Hall on the car park side of the building had been smashed. This has now been repaired by Stevenage Glass.

Recreation & Amenities

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

- **RoSPA re weekly inspection report sheet**

Mr. Poulton said that a letter had been received from RoSPA suggesting that it is in the best interests of the Parish Council to carry-out weekly checks on all their play equipment. However, these checks are very superficial and do not require any technical knowledge.

Mr. Meischke is in contact with RoSPA on the subject and will report back to the Parish Council during a future meeting.

Action: J. Meischke

- **Post-and-rail fence – quotations and funding**

The following four quotations have been obtained for the complete replacement of the post-and-rail.

• G. M. Fencing	£1416
• Jeff Skidmore	£1280
• Michael Stanley	£1220
• N. J. Whitehead	£1200

It was agreed to accept Mr. Whitehead's quotation, provided that it is for the complete replacement of all wood.

Action: N. Poulton

The Clerk to write and inform the other three contractors that their quotations have not been accepted.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Poulton said that he had managed to get a grant from EHDC for £500, based on us accepting Mr. Whitehead's quotation of £1200.

The Clerk to write a letter of thanks to EHDC.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Manhole cover in sportsfield**

Mr. Poulton said that drains associated with the manhole covers on the sportsfield are in use. However, we have been unable to find out to whom they belong. Because the manhole covers are currently an injury risk, it was agreed to accept Mr. Bunyan's quotation to make them safe and at the same time carry work out to the two gable ends of the Community Hall. The total price for this work is £240.

Action: N. Poulton

- **2002 sportsfield grass cutting**

Sodexo have submitted their quotation of £613.55 plus VAT for the grass cutting in 2002. This quotation has been accepted and two grass cuts have already been completed.

Environment

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

- **Byelaws - Watton Green and the Lammas**

This item is on-going.

- **Lammas**

Mr. Dunhill said that the remaining 30 trees have now been planted on the Lammas.

Mr. Poulton said that unfortunately the work done in the past by the Countryside Management Service had increased the rabbit problem on the Lammas bank, i.e. the debris from previous clearance work had been used to form a barrier against deer etc. Rabbits thrive in such a dense environment and are protected from ferrets and gassing.

- **Rabbit problem on Lammas**

Mr. Stock said that he and Mr. Poulton met with an ADAS representative on the Lammas. A report has since been received which has been copied to all Parish Councillors.

The ADAS representative confirmed that the rabbits in the Lammas bank were causing some crop damage in the adjoining field. However, this damage was no more than that caused by rabbits on the by-pass bank and the old rifle range site, both of which adjoin the Abel Smith land in question.

There are three options open to the Parish Council.

- Continue to ferret the land - This it proving not to be effective enough.
- Gassing - This would cause a lot of ill feeling in the village and could be a potential hazard to walkers and their dogs. Also, it is prohibited to gas within a specified area of badger sets or fox dens (both of these can be found in the vicinity of the Lammas bank). In addition, there is an access problem due to the tightly compacted scrub left by the Countryside Management Services project, which is also encouraging rabbits into this area.
- Fencing - This it the preferred option and would be the most effective one. However, to make the fence effective it should be installed between 1 – 2 metres from the bank to stop rabbits from burrowing underneath.

Mr. Stock AND Mr. Poulton did meet with Fred Burnell to discuss gassing and fencing. Gassing as ruled out very quickly by all parties. Mr. Stock and Mr. Poulton therefore met and discussed the fencing option with two other contractors. The two contractors subsequently provided us with the following quotations for the installation of rabbit-proof fencing on the Lammas.

- RTD Woodland Limited approximately 412 metres @ £3.90 per metre = £1606.80 + VAT
- M & J Oakley 450 metres @ £4.00 per metre = £1800.00

Mr. Poulton read out Mr. Abel Smith's letter dated 18th March in which he asks to know what action the Parish Council would be implementing in the light of its consultations with DEFRA and the Countryside Management Services.

Mr. Poulton then read out our reply of 28th March as follows.

'Thank you for your letter of 18th March concerning the rabbits on the Lammas.

Be assured that the Parish Council takes this subject most seriously and has spent much time seeking advice from professionals.

In addition to consultations with DEFRA and the Countryside Management Service, the Parish Council has commissioned a report from the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service. We have just received this report.

We have also had recent site meetings with fencing contractors and a pest-control officer to discuss the problem and the possible solutions in detail.

Obviously, we want to do what we can to control the rabbits. However, because there is evidence of rabbit activity in the whole area, we have been told that any unilateral action on our part would be very expensive and of limited value. It would be far better to work together with adjacent landowners to resolve the problem and we remain keen to discuss this further, e.g. with yourself. We would welcome your views on this proposal.

The subject is to be discussed again at our next full Parish Council meeting.'

Mr. Poulton then read out Mr. Abel Smith's letter dated 2nd April

'Thank you for your letter dated the 28th March concerning rabbits on The Lammas.

I totally agree with you that unilateral action is expensive and of limited value. I have been controlling rabbits on a recurring basis and I am merely asking that the Parish Council does likewise.

Occupiers have certain statutory obligations regarding rabbits that are harboring on their land and they have a legal responsibility to control infestations and prevent them from causing damage to neighbours' crops. I do not think I am making any unreasonable request in asking that the Parish Council fulfils its obligations. It may be of interest to the Council that I have written in similar terms to both Railtrack and the County Council asking them to do likewise on their linesides and roadsides respectively and both organizations have acted properly and promptly.

I await to hear from you that positive action will be taken, please.'

Mr. Poulton said that following the report in the Mercury Newspaper about the rabbit problem on the Lammas, he has received several calls and letters on the subject. He had also received two offers to long-net the Lammas bank. This procedure involves putting down long lengths of soft netting. The rabbits get

caught up in the netting and are unable to disentangle themselves from it. The nets are later collected and the rabbits killed.

After lengthy discussion, it was agreed to write to Mr. Abel Smith informing him that the Parish Council discussed again the rabbit problem on the Lammas at its meeting held on 10th April 2002 and that it was agreed that the best option would be to install rabbit-proof fencing along the 412-metre length of the Parish Council owned land which starts from the Mill Lane end of the Lammas bank (a map showing the land owned by the Parish Council to be enclosed) and that the Parish Council believes that the Abel Smith Estate owns the remaining part of the land.

Also informing him that it would be of little use for us to install any rabbit fencing without the Abel Smith Estate fencing their part of the wooded bank and that the Parish Council would like to arrange to meet with him to discuss this matter further and agree the exact siting of the fence (which needs to be far enough from the bank to stop rabbits from digging under the fence. The ADAS report has suggested a distance of 1.8 metres.

Action: N. Poulton/D. Stock/J. Allsop

Parish Councillors agreed to meet on the Lammas on Saturday 14th April at 2.30 pm, to discuss the matter further.

Action: Parish Councillors

Note: The installation of rabbit fencing on the allotments will be resolved at the same time as that on the Lammas. This item to be placed on the agenda under Environment Sub-Committee and entitled rabbit fencing on Allotments and the Lammas.

- **Oak Tree in the sportsfield hedge along School Lane**

Mr. Stock said that the Oak Tree has now been pollarded and Dr Norden has given us a cheque for £240 to cover the cost of the work (net of VAT).

- **Planting on land at Walkern Road**

Mr. Poulton said that Mr. and Mrs. Taylor of Beane Cottage asked if they could do some additional landscaping on the area of land, at the side of their property, which they donated to the Parish Council. Mr. Poulton gave them permission to carry-out the work.

b) Sportsfield

i) Report

Mr. Poulton carried-out the sportsfield report on the 8th April 2002, the result of which is as follows.

- **Sportsfield:**

Condition of grass	Excellent - just been cut.
Litter	Litter, but Don Chandler has been on holiday and will clear this week. (This work has now been done.)
Dog fouling	No.
Netball posts	OK.
General	Good, except for litter.

- **Children's Playground:**

Condition of surface	Good.
Litter/Litter bin	Full – see above.
Large swings	Good.
Small swings	Good.
See-Saw	Good.
Multi-play and slide	Good.
Two spring sit-on	Good.
Comments	Good.

- **Community Hall:**

General Condition (Exterior)	Good.
Litter bin	Full – see above.
Car Park	Good.
General	Good.

- **Multi-Purpose Play Area:**

Surface	Good.
Boundary Fencing	Good.
Tennis nets	Good.
Litter	None.
General	Footpath needs cement in places, possible trip hazard.

- **Great Innings Play Area:**

Equipment	Good.
Surfaces	Good.
Litter	Good.
Dog fouling	Good.
Comments	Matting at entrance.

• **Allotments Area:**

Access	Good.
Condition of paths between Allotments	Good.
Condition of Allotments under cultivation	Good.
Condition of Allotments not under cultivation	Good.
Litter	None.
Comments	-

• **Culverts on Mill Lane**

Litter and rubbish in and around Culverts	A lot – needs clearing.
Dog-fouling	None.
Comments	Tesco trolley by bridge.

• **Salt bins**

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

- **General** NB. Police car touring Watton-at-Stone at 3 o'clock on 8th April 2002.

• **Footpath by MPPA**

Mr. Poulton asked Mr. Knight to inspect the footpath between the MPPA and the sportsfield because he felt that it could be unsafe.

Action: I. Knight

• **Tesco trolley by bridge in Mill Lane**

Mr. Poulton asked the Clerk to contact Tesco to remove the shopping trolley by the bridge in Mill Lane.

Action: J. Allsop

6 Planning

a) Applications

i) Woodhall Park

Installation of security alarm system

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) Whempstead Lane

Dwelling house

This item was discussed following 3 c, Action points outstanding for more than two months (on pages 3 and 4 of these minutes).

iii) Whempstead Lane

Alteration and resubmission of existing application

This item was discussed following 3 c, Action points outstanding for more than two months (on pages 3 and 4 of these minutes).

iv) 1 Motts Close

Extension to lounge. Formation of playroom within existing curtilage.

Provision of replacement garage

Parish Councillors studied the plans for this application and, after discussion concern was expressed about the effect that proposed extension would have on the amenity of the adjacent property.

It was agreed to write to EHDC accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Poulton said the following planning application was received today.

v) Flat 5, Watton House, Watton-at-Stone

Formation of dormer window-roof area above flat

Parish Councillors studied the plans for this application.

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

Action: J. Allsop

7 Correspondence received

a) Rev. Simon Manley-Cooper, Watton-at-Stone PCC – request for annual donation towards production of the Parish News

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Knight signed the member's interest book and left the meeting so that this item could be discussed.

Mr. Stock took the chair introduced this item and then asked Mr. Filer to continue with the detail.

Mr. Filer read out a letter dated 19th March requesting an annual donation towards the production of the Parish News. Watton-at-Stone is the only Parish Council out of the four Parishes that does not contribute towards the cost of the Parish News. Bramfield Parish Council donates £125, Stapleford and Waterford Parish Council donates £275 (this is in addition to £120 to each of the PCC's of Stapleford and Waterford for general church funds).

Mr. Filer proposed that because we are the largest Parish Council, we donate £300 to the Watton-at-Stone PCC. Mr. Stock seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Knight returned to the meeting.

Mr. Poulton took the chair again.

b) Letter from Watton Fayre

Mr. Poulton said that Keith Bewley (Chairman of the Watton-at-Stone Millennium Mayfayre Committee) had sent us a cheque for £2,500, which is the money raised at the Millennium Mayfayre.

Mr. Poulton said that he had made some initial enquiries. Ornate signs in solid oak are very expensive and the funds look as though they will only cover the cost of a one-sided sign. He also said that Keith Bewley's design a very complicated and would be very costly to produce.

It was agreed that a small working group be formed to bring this project forward. Mr. Poulton asked who would be interested. Mrs. Dinnin and Mrs. McCash volunteered to take this item further. Mr. Stock was asked to join them and did so. Mrs. McCash was given the related correspondence.

Mr. Riddle left the meeting.

c) EHDC – The queen's Golden Jubilee 2002

Mr. Poulton said that EHDC had written to inform us that grant money is available (up to £300 for each application) for Jubilee projects.

Mr. Poulton to give copies of these letters to the Watton Church fête and the George and Dragon respectively.

d) EHDC – Leaf clearance

Mr. Poulton said that following submission of our invoice for leaf clearance, the new Waste-Services Manger at EHDC had written stating that EHDC did not fund any leaf clearance. The Clerk wrote back to inform him that EHDC had been paying for leaf clearance in Watton-at-Stone since the financial year 1993/1994. Mr. Poulton said that EHDC had now agreed to reimburse us for the leaf clearance. Watton-at-Stone is the only parish that has receives funding for leaf clearance.

EHDC – Street cleansing and grounds maintenance contracts

Mr. Poulton read out a letter dated 2nd April from Shirley Clark (Head of Operations at EHDC) asking us to submit suggestions for improvements to EHDC's street cleansing and ground maintenance contracts.

It was agreed to respond to EHDC stating that we would like to see all of the roads and streets in our parish cleaned on a more regular basis. Also, requesting them to issue us with a schedule of works for street cleansing.

Action: J. Allsop

Alan Rattue – Queens Golden Jubilee exhibition

Mr. Stock said that Allen Rattue had given him receipts amounting to ££194.74. These are required for accounting purposes as proof of expenditure prior to our payment of the agreed grant of £175 from our Golden Jubilee fund. The extra expenditure was due to an increase in the price of the hall hire.

Mr. Stock therefore proposed that the Parish Council’s grant to Mr. Rattue be increased from £175 to £194.74. Mrs. McCash seconded and all present were in favour.

A cheque to be sent to Mr. Rattue accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

8 Reports from other Organisations

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

Mr. Stock said that the Conservation Society held its AGM on the 14th March.

The following elections were made.

- Chairman – Mr. Peter Knight
- Vice-Chairman – Mr. Peter Aknai
- Secretary – Mrs. Barbara Knight
- Treasurer – Mr. Peter Aknai

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

Mr. Knight said that annual hire agreement had not yet been signed by the Parish Council and the Sports and Social Club.

The Clerk to arrange for Mr. Poulton (Chairman of the Parish Council) and Mr. Straker (Chairman of the Sports and Social Club) to sign a new agreement.

Action: J. Allsop

• **Watton-at-Stone Youth Club**

Mrs. Dinnin said that there had been no progress in obtaining a leader for the Youth Club. She reported that Roger Inglis has now left Youth & Community Service at HCC and the department is very low on staff. However, Watton-at-Stone has had its name put forward for funding of a youth leader in the coming financial year.

9 Accounts/Correspondence

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash

Receipts

None

Payments

None

Cheques required

St. Albans Diocesan Board	Sportsfield/MPPA ground rent	90.00
HCC	Name badges for Inter Parish Conference	12.87
SLCC	Clerks training	70.00
HCC	Lighting Maintenance	435.31
CPRE	Annual membership	25.00
Herts Tree Care	Work to Oak tree on School Lane	282.00
D R Monk	To tidy High Street flowerbed & clear leaves by MPPA	50.00
J. Allsop	10 reams paper, 1000 envelopes, guillotine, printer ink	91.73
Boardmans Photocopying	Charges to 31.03.02	41.83
Inland Revenue	Tax and NI	114.24
Watton PCC	Donation towards delivery of Parish Council News letter	10.00
J. Allsop	Phone calls and line rental to 4 th March	35.64
J. Allsop	Phone calls and line rental to 4 th April	33.68
J. Allsop	April salary	491.05
		<u>1783.35</u>

Cheques received

Watton Mayfayre 2000	Funds raised to be put towards ornate village sign	2500.00
Dr. Norden	Donation towards work to Oak Tree in School Lane	240.00
		<u>2740.00</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash

Receipts

Mr. Keen – Main Hall	60.00
Nikki Roberts – Main Hall	30.00
Floodlighting to 22.02.02	70.00
Colin Smith	<u>30.00</u>
	<u>190.00</u>

Payments

Banked on 8.3.02 and 11.03.02	230.00
Mrs. Andrews – rebate on hire	45.00
Blinds and Awnings	<u>82.25</u>
	<u>357.25</u>

Cheques required

Wicksteed Leisure	To install new play equipment and safety surface	14617.00
Business Gas	Supply	773.49
D. Bunyan	Work at Community Hall	49.35
K. Burgess	To install new external light above Main Hall fire exit	125.00
3 Valleys Water	Estimated supply	50.00
Cornhill Insurance	Annual premium	861.63
Stevenage Glass	To replace broken glass window above door	70.03
C. Bewley	53 hours cleaning	<u>278.25</u>
		<u>16824.75</u>

Cheques received

Sycamore Residents Assoc	Pavilion hire	14.00
Mrs Andrews	Pavilion & Main Hall hire (rebate given for not using Main Hall = £45, see petty cash)	81.00
B & D MRS	Parish Council room hire	28.00
Sycamore Residents Assoc	Pavilion hire	<u>7.00</u>
		<u>130.00</u>

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

10 Chairman’s / Clerk’s Report

• **Policing issues update**

Mr. Poulton said that PC John Ivens had agreed to attend the Annual Parish Meeting and update us on policing issues in the parish.

• **The meeting closed at 10.00 pm.**

• **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 1st May 2002.**