

**Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2003**

Present:	Mr. N. Poulton (Chairman)	Mr. D. Stock (Vice-Chairman)
	Mr. V. Dunhill	Mr. D. Filer
	Mr. I. Knight	Mrs. H. McCash
	Mr. J. Meischke	Mr. M. Smith
Public:	Mr. E. Riddle	

**1 Apologies for absence**

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

**2 Public Participation**

None.

**3 Declaration of Interests**

Mrs. McCash declared a prejudicial interest in item 6 b iii, Planning Decisions - 83 Hazeldell, 2-storey rear extension (on page 4 of these minutes).

**4 Chairman's/Clerk's Report**

Mr. Poulton said that the following items had been received after the agenda was published.

**i) Hertfordshire Constabulary**

Hertfordshire Constabulary has written to invite us to join them, on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December at 1700, at their Police Headquarters in Welwyn Garden City for an evening that will provide an opportunity for us to find out more about their work. Mr. Poulton said that he had attended similar meetings in the past and had found them to be very informative.

Mr. Filer to attend the meeting and notify Hertfordshire Constabulary accordingly. **Action: D. Filer**

Mr. Filer to report on this item during the Parish Council meeting to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2003.

**Action: D. Filer**

**ii) EHDC – Members’ Allowances** - This item to be discussed under 8 a, Budget & Finance Sub-Committee (on page 6 of these minutes).

**iii) Letter from Mrs. Elsie Watton-Forster**

Mrs. Watton-Forster (of Sydney Australia) has written to the Parish Council asking for information about Watton-at-Stone and how it got its name

It was agreed to send her a copy of the Watton-at-Stone Village Guide, the 100 years of Parish Councils and the Silver Jubilee booklets. **Action: N. Poulton**

**5 Minutes of the last meeting**

**a) Acceptance**

**• Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2003**

Mrs. McCash proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

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

**b) Review of actions**

**• Advertise Mobile Police Unit dates in Parish News**

This action point has been completed.

Mr. Knight said that he visited the Mobile Police Unit and obtained various leaflets which will be distributed throughout the parish together with the Parish News.

**• Try to attend Parishes for Rural Environment Protection meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> October**

Mrs. Dinnin and Mr. Meischke were unable to attend the meeting.

**• Ascertain if the allotment holders are covered under our public liability insurance**

Mr. Filer said that the allotment holders are not covered under the Parish Council’s public liability insurance. The Allotment and Garden Association has been informed verbally.

**• Write to The Chestnuts, Kimberley and the Diocesan Board re ferreting**

This action point has been completed.

Mr. Poulton said that Mrs. Evernden (of Kimberley) has given her verbal consent to allow Bob Adams to ferret on her land. A letter has been sent to Bob Adams asking him to contact Mrs Evernden directly.

Mr. Poulton said that the Diocesan Board had given us written permission to ferret on the allotment land that we lease from them. He said that we wrote again on 31<sup>st</sup> October asking the Diocesan Board for permission to ferret the land that they currently rent-out for grazing. We have not yet received a response.

No response has been received from Mr. and Mrs. Papa of The Chestnuts.

- **Contact Tony Bradford to ask him for a copy of the TPO list and map**

The Clerk said that she had spoken to Ruth Bradford and asked for a copy of the TPO list and map. However, Tony Bradford has not yet responded to our request.

The Clerk to chase.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Contact Mr. Mould re ornate village sign**

This item to be discussed under 7 a, ornate village sign (on page 4 of these minutes).

- **Contact Mr. Smith to find out if he has a pneumatic drill**

Mrs. McCash said that she did not contact Mr. Smith about the pneumatic drill because he had been unwell. Mr. Smith said he was quite well now and would be happy to discuss details on the installation of the post for the ornate village sign.

**Action: H. McCash/M. Smith**

- **Contact Val Weaver (Hertfordshire Highways) to ask for a progress report on Bull footpath**

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter dated 5<sup>th</sup> November from Val Weaver (Hertfordshire Highways).

‘I write to inform you of my progress on the above matter and seek your Parish Council’s local knowledge.

- The land owner of the area can dedicate it to the public. This process usually takes three to six months but requires the land owner to be known.
- The County Council requires user evidence stating over twenty years of use with no break.
- Historic evidence is found showing it has been a footpath all along with years of delay in establishing it formally.

This is where I need your help, I have to show all reasonable effort to establish who the owner is and request your parish speaks to local residents established in the village for many years. If any are willing to give statement to use or know an owner.

In the meantime I will check with the County Solicitor and East Herts District Council planners, to see if any further light can be shown on this matter.

I look forward to your support in progressing this report.’

Mr. Meischke agreed to investigate the items highlighted in Val Weaver’s letter. **Action: J. Meischke**

- **Write to the Hertfordshire Highways re barrier by Old School Orchard and copy letter to Paula Cheesman, HCC Rights of Way**

This action point has been completed.

Mr. Poulton reported that Valerie Weaver (Hertfordshire Highways) wrote on 5<sup>th</sup> November to say that she has added our request to the list of outstanding highway matters for Watton-at-Stone. She will send us a copy of the list within then next two weeks to confirm the priority.

This item to remain on the agenda under Specific Items until it has been resolved.

**Agenda: 12/03**

- **Write to WAGN re Watton-at-Stone Railway Station sign to be revised to read ‘Station Car Park’**

This action point has been completed, however no response has been received to date.

The Clerk to give Mr. Poulton a copy of our letter.

**Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Stock to speak to Norma Unwin (WAGN) on the subject during the Public Meeting on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2003 (at 2000 in the Community Hall) to discuss problems associated with our railway station.

**Action: N. Poulton/D. Stock**

- **Give the Clerk amendments to the Village Directory if you have not already done so**

No further amendments to the Village Directory have been given to the Clerk.

- **Copy the Village Directory for distribution around the village**

The Clerk has not yet received the amendments related to the Scout and Guide Group from its Chairman, Roger Green. The Clerk to chase.

**Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Poulton to be given a copy of the updated Village Directory for final checking before it is copied for distribution.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Set a date for the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee to discuss the 2004/2005 budget figures**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 8 a, Budget & Finance Sub-Committee - Approval of minutes of meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2003 (on pages 5 and 6 of these minutes).

- **Find and purchase suitable laserjet all-in-one printer/copier/scanner**

This action point has been completed.

Mr. Poulton thanked Mr. Clark and Mr. Dunhill for identifying a suitable new printer/scanner/copier/fax machine. Mr. Dunhill negotiated the purchase of a Hewlett Packard 3330 series from County Supplies for £365 plus VAT.

- **Chase Cricket Club to ensure that the roller is re-sited and secured with a lock and chain**  
 Mr. Meischke said that this item is outstanding. He will be contacting Martin Tipper to arrange to move the roller. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Write to the Sports & Social Club to ask for a copy of the insurance certificate for the Cricket Club building**  
 This action point has been completed. No response has been received to date.
- **Investigate the cost of recovering the roller blinds on the emergency glass-doors in the pavilion**  
 Mr. Meischke obtained the price of roller blinds from Homebase. A replacement blind would cost approximately £120 (plus VAT). Sunstopper Blinds and Awnings has given us a quotation of £156 (plus VAT) to recover and fit the roller blinds.  
 It was agreed that we accept the quotation from Sunstopper Blinds and Awnings. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Investigate the purchase of three 14' railway sleepers**  
 Mr. Poulton said that he had discovered that railway sleepers do not come in 14' lengths.  
 For Mr. Filer's benefit, Mr. Poulton explained that all but two of the telegraph poles around the car park are rotten and need replacing. It was agreed that the replacements should be railway sleepers, which would be fixed permanently to the ground and be the full length of the car park. Vehicle access would have to be gained through the sportsfield gate.  
 Mr. Poulton asked Mr. Filer if there are sufficient funds in this year's budget to do the work. Mr. Filer confirmed that there is.  
 Mr. Smith said that railway sleepers can be obtained in 12' lengths. It was agreed that Mr. Poulton and Mr. Smith liaise on the purchase of 12' sleepers. **Action: N. Poulton/M. Smith**  
 Mr. Meischke to investigate a suitable way of anchoring the railway sleepers to the ground. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Accept quotation from A.D.L roofing**  
 This action point has been completed.  
 Mr. Poulton said that the work has not been done yet. The Clerk to chase. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Accept parts of Care Group's quotation for the cleaning of the floors in the Community Hall**  
 This action point has been completed.  
 Mr. Poulton said that the work had been completed to a very high standard.
- **Carry-out Six monthly check**  
 This action point has been completed.  
 Refer to item 8 b, Sportsfield - Six monthly check of MPPA, Play Area on sportsfield and Community Hall equipment (on pages 10, 11, and 12 of these minutes).
- **Arrange for 2 floodlights to be repaired/replaced**  
 This item to be discussed under 8 a, Community Hall - Quotation for 2 replacement floodlights on MPPA (on pages 6 and 7 of these minutes).
- **Write to Hertfordshire Highways and EHDC re damage to tree in Hazeldell**  
 This action point has been completed.  
 Mr. Poulton read out a letter, dated 5<sup>th</sup> November, from Val Weaver (Hertfordshire Highways) who is arranging for the Area Engineer (Ian Bishop) to inspect the tree and advise us directly of his findings.  
 Mrs. McCash said that she saw Mr. Bishop taking pictures of the damaged tree on Tuesday (yesterday).  
 The Clerk to chase before the December Parish Council meeting, if no response has been received. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Arrange to meet with Mr. Abel Smith to discuss the Lammas and surrounding area**  
 This action point has been completed.  
 Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Report on meeting with Mr. Abel Smith (on pages 7 and 8 of these minutes).
- **Visit Parish Council land situated between 48 and 50 Rivershill**  
 This action point has been completed.  
 Mr. Meischke said that he visited the site with Mrs. Dinnin. Brambles are obstructing the entry to the site and are between three and four feet in height. Some clearance work does need doing, although not as extensive as that done last year.

It was agreed to ask Tim Clark if he would be willing to do work on this site again this year.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Inspect bike-ramp area to see if it had been cleared of rubbish**  
Mr. Poulton said that he had inspected the site and it was clear of rubbish.
- **Talk to the bike-ramp users asking them to use the bin**  
Mrs. McCash said that she had spoken to the bike-ramp users and they appear to be keeping the site clean and tidy.
- **Write to Ted Brown to find out if we need to increase his scheduled hours**  
This action point has been completed. (See item below)
- **visit Ted Brown to assess his hours of work**  
Mr. Poulton said he met with Ted Brown and, after discussion, agreed that his weekly litterpicking duties needed to be increased from 5 to 8 hours.  
Mr. Poulton proposed that Mr. Brown's hours be increased accordingly. Mr. Filer seconded the motion and all present were in favour.  
Mr. Brown to be given a revised duties schedule to reflect these changes. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Send a copy of Mr. Booker's letter to Ted Brown & express our appreciation of the work he does**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to PC Ivens to ask him when Watton and Whempstead will be able to use the speed-warning equipment**  
This action point has been completed. No response has been received to date.  
The Clerk to chase. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Write article for Parish News**  
This action point has been completed.

**c) Action points outstanding for more than two months**

None.

**6 Planning**

**a) Applications**

None.

**b) Decisions**

- i) **Lane Croft, Perrywood Lane**  
Enlargement of proposed single storey front extension - EHDC –permission granted
- ii) **Bardolphs Farm**  
Installation of replacement 30 M tower to be used to telecommunications purposes  
- EHDC –permission granted
- iii) **83 Hazeldell**  
2-storey side extension - EHDC –permission granted

**7 Specific Items**

**a) Ornate village sign**

Mrs. McCash said that Mr. Mould delivered the ornate village sign over two weeks ago. However, due to a misunderstanding, the sign had been painted. The Parish Council has always wanted a natural wood finish with small amounts of paint used to highlight items such as cricket balls.

Mr. Poulton said that because of the misunderstanding, the Parish Council would have to pay an additional £500 to have the paint removed.

The 8 ft high post and fitting that the sign will be mounted on is currently storey in the Community Hall.

**b) Update on 'Home to School Transport'**

Mr. Poulton said that he had recently spoken to Sarah Davies who informed him that Mrs. Lyn Oakman will not be presenting the petition to HCC during its full Council meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> November. Mrs. Davies is still trying to find someone else and is concerned that parent representation at the meeting may be poor.

**c) Trees cut down by Railtrack at bridge in Perrywood Lane**

Mr. Poulton said that the Clerk had spoken to Bob Abbott (Construction Manager, May Gurney) and subsequently received the following fax dated 28<sup>th</sup> October.

**'HDB/58, Perrywood Lane, Watton-at-Stone**

Following our recent telephone conversation, I have confirmed within our Project Officer, and with Network Rail Planning and Liabilities, the official stand point regarding the re-planting of the trees on this scheme.

As was touched on previously, Network Rail are under no obligation to replace unprotected trees/vegetation when “permitted development” is carried out as part of the General Permitted Development Order in terms of maintenance to the infrastructure. Article 3 of the same Order also exempts such development from an Environmental Impact Assessment, which may have given Local Authorities, such as yourselves, a part in negotiations to establish pre-requisite within the scheme prior to commencement.

Having said all this, and mindful of the general public's perception of large companies not being answerable, it is my own view that something can be done by MGR as a goodwill gesture to alleviate your concerns.

To this end I will arrange for a boundary line of hedging to be planted prior to the winter, which will establish over time, and I hope, form a screen of a more acceptable appearance from the highway.

In offering this, it should be noted that in no way should the offer be seen to set a precedent, recognise any obligation or responsibility of either MGR or Network Rail, and as such is offered without prejudice.’

**d) Entrance Markings to Hazeldell**

Mr. Stock said that he had nothing further to report on this item.’

**e) Women’s Institute**

Mr. Poulton was sad to report that the Women’s Institute has folded due to lack of support.

The Parish Council has been given the following items for safekeeping.

- 5 photographs (four framed and one unframed)
- 1 photograph album
- 1 scrap book

These items to be stored in the Community Hall loft.

Mrs. McCash said that because the Community Hall loft is subject to a damp atmosphere, the pages of the photograph album would stick together unless they had blotting paper between them. She agreed to place blotting paper between each page of the photograph album.

**Action: H. McCash**

In due course, the residue of the Women’s Institute funds will also be given to the Parish Council for safekeeping.

**8 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**  
Because of his absence during our meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> October, it was agreed to defer this item to tonight’s meeting so that Mr. Filer can go through the accounts with Parish Councillors.

Mr. Filer explained the expenditure and income items in detail, which are generally in-line with 50% of the budgeted figures.

Community Hall income shows an inflated figure because the whole of the Parish Council’s grant (and not 50%) had already been paid. In addition, the gas bills appear to be unduly high.

The Clerk to give Mr. Filer copies of the gas bills.

**Action: J. Allsop**

‘Gas supply’ to be placed on the agenda, under Budget & Finance Sub-Committee, for the Parish Council meeting to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2003.

**Agenda: 12/03**

Mr. Filer said that next year the Parish Council’s grant to the Community Hall would be paid quarterly.

- **Approval of minutes of meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2003**

Mr. Stock proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by Mr. Filer as a true record. Mr. Knight seconded the motion and Mr. Filer and Mr. Poulton were in favour. Mr. Filer signed the minutes.

- **Grass cutting**

A quotation to be obtained from Sodexo for the cutting of the sportsfield grass in 2004.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Budget 2004/2005**

Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors were given a copy of the draft budget figures for 2004/2005.

Mr. Filer said that he and the Clerk had reviewed each item and compared the figures to those already spent this year. The process was then repeated at the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> October and alterations made where necessary.

Mr. Filer proposed that the following recommendations made by the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee be agreed.

- The Community Hall hire charges remain the same and a notice to this effect to be placed in the Parish News. **Action: D. Filer**
- The Sports & Social Club hire charges rise from £1900 to £2000 (a rise of just over 5%).
- Allotment rent to remain at £10 per full allotment (half allotments £5).

Mrs. McCash seconded the motions and all present were in favour.

- **Salaries**

The £5.50 hourly rate for Ted Brown and Christine Bewley to remain the same.

It was agreed to set a budgetary provision for a 3.5% increase in the Clerk's salary. A copy of the Clerk's scale of salary increases to be obtained from the Society of Local Council Clerks.

**Action: J. Allsop**

The Clerk's salary to be placed on the agenda for discussion, under Budget & Finance Sub-Committee, for the Parish Council meeting to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2003.

**Agenda: 12/03**

The Clerk left the meeting while the following item was discussed.

- **Christmas bonuses**

The following Christmas bonuses were agreed.

The Clerk	£120
Ted Brown	£60
Christine Bewley	£60

Mrs. McCash raised concern about the self-employment status of Christine Bewley because of the nature of her work and the tightening up of the Inland Revenue regulations. Mrs. McCash agreed to investigate this issue and report back to the Parish Council at its meeting to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2003.

**Action: H. McCash**

- **Precept 2004/2005**

The precept forms had been received from EHDC.

Mrs. McCash proposed that the Parish Council agree a precept of £22,745 and that the forms be duly completed and returned to EHDC. Mr. Knight seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Parish Council donation to running costs of Parish News**

It was agreed to send a donation of £300 to the Watton-at-Stone PCC. This amount was agreed in the budget for 2003/04.

The Clerk to action accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **EHDC – Members' Allowances**

Mr. Filer said that EHDC wrote on 7<sup>th</sup> November to inform us of the allowances that Parish Councillors can claim.

It was agreed by all present that Parish Councillors will not claim any allowances.

## Community Hall Trustees

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

- **Storage Room in Main Hall**

Mr. Stock said that there is a persistent problem with regard to the state of the internal storage room in the Main Hall. He suggested that the problem be eased if shelving was erected on the left-hand side of the storage room.

After much discussion, Mr. Filer proposed that we spend up to £100 to install appropriate shelving. Mr. Knight seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Mr. Meischke to speak to all regular hirers of the Main Hall (i.e. Badminton, Kick boxing and Jujitsu Club) to get their views on the proposal.

**Action: J. Meischke**

- **Repair to external lock at Community Hall**

Mr. Meischke said that the external lock on the car-park side of the Community Hall had broken (due to wear-and-tear, not vandalism) and the door could not be opened from the outside. An emergency locksmith (Lock Stock and Barrel of Hertford) was called out. The lock, which has been difficult to use for some time, had a broken clip in the mechanism, which has now been repaired.

Mr. Meischke estimated that the cost of repairing the lock would be around £50. However, we have not received an invoice to date.

- **Quotation for 2 replacement floodlights on MPPA**

Mr. Meischke said that he had obtained the following quotations relating to the two replacement floodlights lamps.

- **MD Electrical Company** -to supply and fit two 2000 watt metal halide lamps (this included investigating why the floodlights were not working and what replacement bulbs were required) £774.66 plus VAT
- **The Lamp Company** – to supply two 2000 watt metal halide lamps only £110.00 plus VAT
- **Harknett Street Lighting Services** – to install pre-supplied lamps £150.00 plus VAT

Mr. Meischke said that he had purchased the two lamps from the Lamp Company and they were fitted by Harknett Street Lighting Services.

Mr. Meischke said that MD Electrical will invoice us for investigating the initial problem.

All present agreed with Mr. Meischke's course of action.

- **Community Hall lighting**

Mr. Meischke said that the football Club had asked if we could get the two external floodlights on the sportsfield side of the Community Hall working again.

A timer and switch would have to be installed (in the external store room) so that the lights are not kept on permanently when they are not required.

It was agreed that Mr. Meischke contact Harknett Street Lighting Services to discuss this matter further.

**Action: J. Meischke**

Mr. Meischke said that he had purchased three lights bulbs for the external toilets.

- **Community Hall exterior**

Mr. Meischke said that vandals had smeared the exterior walls of the Community Hall with pumpkin, eggs and graffiti. He said that, thanks to Mr. Poulton, this had now been cleaned off.

- **Cleaning hours**

Mr. Meischke said that he had met with Christine Bewley to discuss the work she does at the Community Hall.

If no extra duties are required, it takes Mrs. Bewley 8 hours to clean the Community Hall. However, each week extra duties are nearly always required.

Mr. Filer said that in the 2004/2005 budget there is a provision for 11 hours cleaning duties.

It was agreed that the Clerk is authorised to draw a cheque for Mrs. Bewley's wages provided the weekly timesheets do not exceed 11 hours per week. If the hours exceed this amount, then authorisation will be required from the Parish Council.

## Recreation & Amenities

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

- **MPPA floodlights**

This item was discussed under item 8 a, Community Hall Trustees - Quotation for 2 replacement floodlights on MPPA (on pages 6 and 7 of these minutes).

- **Lorry in sportsfield**

Mr. Meischke said that contractors worked on some of the trees on Mr. and Mrs. Maskall's property, at 9 Rectory Lane, and had gained access via the sportsfield and thus caused damage to its surface.

## Environment

In the absence of Mrs. Dinnin, Mr. Stock reported on the following items concerning the Environment Sub-Committee.

- **Trees on Lammas**

Mr. Stock said that the Environment Agency had completed work on the Lammas trees along the riverbank. However, some logs and bonfire ash remain on the site.

One of the large Poplar trees on the riverbank opposite 19 Lammas Road (i.e. Mrs. Brenda Marshall's address) needs urgent attention. It has a large branch overhanging the river. The Environment Agency has given a verbal quotation of £500 to remove the branch.

It was agreed to contact Herts Tree Care to obtain an alternative quotation.

**Action: H. McCash**

- **Report on the meeting with Abel Smith**

Mr. Stock reported on the meeting that he and Mrs. Dinnin had with Mr. R. Abel Smith on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2003.

The main points expressed by Mr. Abel Smith concerned the Parish Council's land-management responsibilities, in particular the need for some land-management on the Lammas bank. He told us what he thought we needed to do.

He was informed of our work so far on the Lammas and on Watton Green, and how we had achieved it. Mr. Abel Smith said that the Watton Green results were very good (although he felt that more needed to be done) and that the project should be used as a model for the Lammas.

Mr. Abel Smith was told that the Parish Council would be informed of the outcome of our meeting and that his comments would be discussed in detail. Also, it was agreed with Mr. Abel Smith that it would be useful to have a site meeting between himself and all Parish Councillors to discuss the situation in more specific detail. A date for which is yet to be agreed (but some time after we have obtained independent expert advice on the work to be done would be sensible).

Subsequently, on 1<sup>st</sup> November, Mrs. Dinnin, Mr. Stock, Mr. Filer and Mr. Dunhill had a site meeting on the Lammas to survey the land prior to this Parish Council meeting. As a result of the site meeting, it was acknowledged that we do need to do some work on the Lammas bank, but so does Mr. Abel Smith on the part within his ownership. Therefore, it could be beneficial for both parties to work together to achieve a successful outcome.

Mr. Stock suggested that to move forward, we need to construct a long-term Management Plan for the Lammas to ensure that current and future Parish Councillors are aware of the requirements for various on-going land-management tasks on the areas within its ownership. He also suggested that the Management Plan should comprise a modular structure so that we can handle and fund tasks in a logical and manageable way. To this end, we need to:

- obtain independent professional advice on what needs to be done
- divide the work into ‘component parts’ of the Management Plan
- prioritise the component parts
- obtain quotations for some or all of the component parts
- seek grant-aid as appropriate.

Mr. Stock to contact the Countryside Management Service (CMS) to seek their assistance.

**Action: D. Stock**

Mr. Stock to write to Mr. Abel Smith to inform him of the current situation.

**Action: D. Stock**

• **Rabbit control on the Allotments**

This item was discussed under 5 b, Review of actions - Write to The Chestnuts, Kimberley and the Diocesan Board re ferreting (on page 1 of these minutes).

• **Draft Allotment Tenancy Agreement**

All Parish Councillors were given a copy of the draft allotment-tenancy agreement prepared by John Love. They went through each item and made amendments where necessary. A copy of the amended Allotment Tenancy Agreement is attached to these minutes. **(see attached)**

It was agreed to write to all allotment holders enclosing a copy of the tenancy agreement and asking them to sign and return it to the Parish Council. (If any existing allotment holder refuses to sign the agreement, their tenancy will not be terminated. However, all new allotment holders will be required to sign the tenancy agreement.) The letter will also outline the relationships between the Diocesan Board, the Parish Council and Allotment and Garden Association as follows.

1. The Parish Council is responsible to the Diocesan Board for the maintenance of the allotment land as per the lease.
2. The Parish Council is responsible for all management aspects of the allotments (e.g. the allocation and de-allocation of plots).
3. The Allotment and Garden Association is a ‘club’ which can raise money to improve the allotment area and arrange for the purchase of bulk goods, etc. if they so wish.
4. The allotment holders are under no obligation to be a member of the Allotment and Garden Association.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**b) Sportsfield**

**i) Report**

Mr. Stock carried-out the sportsfield report on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2003, the result of which is as follows.

• **Sportsfield:**

Condition of grass	Well used. Many tyre tracks on pitch. Some to/from cricket shed.
Litter	None.
Dog fouling	OK.
Netball posts	OK.
General	OK

• **Children’s Play Area:**

Condition of surface	OK.
Litter/Litterbin	OK.
Large swings	OK.

Small swings	OK.
See-Saw	OK
Rainbow multi-play and slide	OK.
Two spring sit-on	OK.
Teen shelter	OK
General	Good overall.
<b>• Bike ramps area:</b>	
Junior Jump	}
Double Ramp	} OK. No signs of use though.
Fun Box	}
<b>• Community Hall:</b>	
General Condition (Exterior)	Graffiti starting again and paint on wall. Stones thrown onto roof. Walls and changing-room windows smeared with liquid of some kind. Cracked glass in pavilion emergency-exit door. Leaking gutter joint: pavilion side.
Litterbin	OK.
Car Park	OK.
General	-
<b>• Multi-Purpose Play Area:</b>	
Surface	OK. Leaves.
Boundary Fencing	OK
Tennis nets	OK
Litter	OK
General	OK
<b>• Great Innings Play Area:</b>	
Equipment	OK.
Surfaces	OK.
Litter	None.
Dog fouling	None.
Comments	Very good condition.
<b>• Allotments Area:</b>	
Access	OK.
Condition of paths between Allotments	OK.
Condition of Allotments under cultivation	OK.
Condition of Allotments not under cultivation	OK.
Litter	OK.
Comments	-.
<b>• Culverts on Mill Lane</b>	
Litter and rubbish in and around Culverts	OK.
Dog-fouling	None.
Comments	Very overgrown.
<b>• Salt bins</b>	
Perrywood Lane	OK.
Entrance to Great Innings	OK.
Great Innings South – outside number 93	OK.
Station Road	OK.
Moorymead Close	OK. (One ½ full.)
Hazeldell	OK.
<b>• Dog-waste bins</b>	
Footpath 17	OK.
Sportsfield	OK.
Church Walk	No lid.
Walkern Road	OK.
Station Road	No lid.
High Street (by Memorial)	OK.
Great Innings	OK.
Mill Lane	OK.
<b>• General Comment</b>	Not much dog fouling anywhere visited.

• **Crack in Glass door**

Mr. Stock and Mr. Poulton have agreed that the crack in the glass door does not need attention.

• **Tyre tracks on sportsfield**

This item was discussed under 8 a, Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee - Lorry in sportsfield (on page 7 of these minutes).

• **Litterbin by play area**

The litterbin by the play area has been vandalised. Ted Brown has removed the bin and repaired the post. A replacement bin has been ordered from Glasdon.

ii) **Weekly report and action**

Mr. Poulton said there was nothing to report from Ted Brown's weekly inspections.

iii) **Six monthly check of MPPA, Play Area on sportsfield and Community Hall equipment**

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Stock carried-out the six-monthly check on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2003, the result of which is as follows.

**MPPA**

Area	Check	OK	Needs Attention	Comments (if any)
Hard surface	Is it free of: • Holes • Cracks • Litter/debris • Weeds • Moss etc. Court marking	Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes		
Kicker boards	Are they: • Secure • Graffiti-free • In good condition. Check for: • Protruding nails • Protruding screws • Splinters/cracks • Missing nails/screws Are the gates free of graffiti, loose/missing nails/screws, cracks and splinters Do the gates open, close and lock	Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes		
Tennis posts	Condition	Yes		
Tennis nets	Condition	Yes		
Flood lights	Are the lamps in contact with the trees Are the lamp posts in good order and free of graffiti	Yes	W	One lamp in contact with a small branch.
Wire fence	Is the wire mesh: • Secured to posts	Yes		
	• Free of cuts/breaks • In good condition	Yes Yes		
	Is the metal-work (e.g. posts, etc.) secure and in good condition	Yes		
Notice board	Is it: • Legible • Free of graffiti • Secure • Free of damage	Yes Yes Yes Yes		
Boundary	Is it: • Free of litter	Yes		

	• In need of a cut	Yes		
	• Free of problem growth	Yes		
General/additional comments (if any): - None.				

**Play Area on sportsfield**

Check the following points on all pieces of play equipment (i.e. Large swings, small swings, seesaw, multi play/slide 2 spring sit-on).			Needs Attention	Comments (if any)
1	All structures and frameworks should be checked to ensure there is not bending, warping, cracking, loosening or breaking.	Yes		
2	Platforms should be free from trip hazards and protruding bolts.	Yes		
3	Fixed items of equipment should be checked to ensure parts are not bent, broken, loosened, worn, or missing.	Yes		
4	There should be no sharp points or protrusions.	Yes		
5	Welds should not be damaged or corroded.	Yes		
6	Access points should be checked to ensure there are no missing or broken rungs, and steps or treads are not loose.	Yes		
7	Exposed mechanisms and moving components have no pinch or crush points.	Yes		
8	Guards, handrails, or swing barriers are not missing, bent or broken and have no loose components.	Yes		
9	All drain holes are clear.	Yes		
10	All fastenings are secure.	Yes		
11	Swing seats and seats in general are not damaged; do not have sharp corners, insecure fittings, chain wear and have no loose or missing components	Yes		
12	Foundations are not cracked, loose in the ground or corroded at the base.	Yes		
13	Mechanical devices and other moving parts have no worn bearings, are not seized or have excessive or unduly noisy motion, have incorrect clearances and/or missing covers.	Yes		
14	There is no play in bearings and they are greased/lubricated. If, after adjustment, there is still play in the bearings, they should be replaced immediately. Note – special attention should be given to “sealed for life” parts.	Yes		
15	For all types of protective surfacing there should be no trip points, areas where water will lay, holes or litter.	Yes		
16	The surface finish of equipment should be free from rust and other corrosion, cracks, splinters, sharp edges and broken or open joints.	Yes		

**Community Hall**

Area	Check	OK	Needs Attention	Comments (if any)
<b>Pavilion</b>				
Tables	Condition	Yes		
Chairs	Condition	Yes		

Corner seat unit	Condition	Yes		
Blinds	Condition	Yes		Possible blinds on emergency doors.
Clock	Condition	Yes		
<b>Main Hall</b>				
2 Benches	Condition	Yes		
Badminton posts *	Condition	Yes		
Badminton net	Condition	Yes		
Sports floor	Condition	Yes		
Floor markings **	Condition	Yes		
External toilets	Condition	Yes		
Internal toilets	Condition	Yes		
<b>Showers</b>	Condition	Yes		Materials need moving from small shower room
<b>Kitchen</b>	Condition	Yes		
First Aid box	Contents: Are they out of date or damaged. Are there any items missing.	Yes		
<b>Fire exit signs</b>		Yes		
<b>Fire extinguishers</b>		Yes		
General/additional comments (if any): None.				

## 9 Correspondence received

### a) Bengeo Rural Parish Council – Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review – 2<sup>nd</sup> Draft

Bengeo Rural Parish Council has written asking us to complete the HCC – ‘Mineral Local plan review second deposit draft form for withdrawing, conditionally withdrawing or maintaining objections to the first deposit draft’ by stating our original objection indicated by the letter M.

It was agreed to respond accordingly.

**Action: N. Poulton**

### b) HCC – Accident re damage to lamp column in Hockerill in May 2000

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> October from Margaret Seabrook (Environment Finance HCC)

‘The cost of repairing the damage to the lamp column has now been ascertained and an account will shortly be prepared.

To date, we have not received the details of your insurance company, therefore we assume that the Parish Council wish to pay for the damage themselves.

If you have any queries, please telephone me on the above number.’

Mr. Poulton said that the Clerk had looked through our records and the minutes. She found that we were in contact with EH Highways Department (now Hertfordshire Highways) but at no time were contacted by the Environment Finance Department. We also submitted a claim form to Cornhill insurance who were awaiting an estimate of the repair cost before they could proceed further.

It was agreed to write to Ms. Seabrook stating that we are amazed that she is contacting us after an incident that occurred three and a half years ago and that she had not made contact with Hertfordshire Highways who we kept fully informed of the situation at the time of the incident.

It was agreed to enclose, with the letter, extracts from the Parish Council minutes at the time of the incident and a copy of our claim form to Cornhill Insurance (our insurers). Ms. Seabrook to be asked to deal direct with Cornhill Insurance.

**Action N. Poulton/J. Allsop**

### c) Mrs. G. Hale re memorial plaque

Mrs. Hale has written asking if the Parish Council would be willing to let her have a plaque (in memory of her late husband) fitted to the seat outside the Counting House in the High Street. The Parish Council purchased this seat when the bus shelter was removed from the site.

It was agreed that Mr. Poulton speak with Mrs. Hale and inform her that it is usual for persons placing plaques on seats to also purchase and donate the seat to the Parish. However, on this occasion the Parish Council will allow her to fit the plaque.

**Action: N. Poulton**

### d) Bengeo Rural Parish Council – 2004 Inter Parish Conference

Bengeo Rural Parish Council is hosting the 2004 Inter Parish Conference on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2004 in the Waterford Village Hall.

It was agreed to inform Bengoe Rural Parish Council that we will be represented at the conference and will inform them of how many Parish Councillors will be attending nearer to the date. **Action: J. Allsop**

## 10 Reports from other Organisations

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

Mr. Stock reminded Parish Councillors that another Public Meeting to discuss, with WAGN representatives, problems associated with our railway station and the train service has been arranged by Barbara Knight (Watton-at-Stone Conservation Society) and the Parish Council. The meeting will be held on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2003, starting at 8 pm, in the Community Hall.

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

Mr. Meischke had nothing to report. However, Mr. Knight said that the Sports and Social Club had now obtained Charitable Status.

## 11 Items for Parish News

The Parish Council will not be placing an article in the next edition of the Parish News.

## 12 Accounts/Correspondence

### Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

#### Petty Cash

##### Receipts

C. Millar – Allotment rent

5.00

5.00

##### Payments

2 keys to Lammas gate padlock

7.98

Ted Brown – 5 hours

27.50

35.48

#### Cheques required

Ted Brown	15¼ hours litterpicking	80.00
Ted Brown	28 hours litterpicking	154.00
Inland Revenue	Tax and NI	156.27
N. J. Whitehead	Hedge cutting	352.50
Boardmans	Photocopying charges	14.45
J. Allsop	Salary £505, stamps £28	533.00
Earl Haig	Poppy donation	<u>60.00</u>
		<u>1350.22</u>

#### Cheques received

M. Freeman	Allotment rent 2003/2004	<u>25.00</u>
R. Green	Allotment rent 2003/2004	10.00
Mr & Mrs Thurlow	Allotment rent 2003/2004	10.00
Mr. Hodges	Allotment rent 2003/2004	10.00
Mr. Wilkinson	Allotment rent 2003/2004	5.00
Mr. White	Allotment rent 2003/2004	5.00
Mr. Hall	Allotment rent 2003/2004	10.00
Mr. Cobb	Allotment rent 2003/2004	10.00
Mr. Stewart	Allotment rent 2003/2004	<u>7.00</u>
		<u>92.00</u>

### Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

#### Petty Cash

##### Receipts

Mr. Keen – Main Hall

90.00

Floodlighting

435.00

Mrs. Grey – Main Hall and Pavilion

39.00

John Murphy

6.00

570.00

##### Payments

16 w 2d 2 pin lamp

15.00

Banked

325.00

340.00

#### Cheques required

C. Bewley	49.5 hours cleaning	272.25
WAS PCC	Advert in Parish Magazine	<u>90.00</u>
		<u>362.25</u>

#### Cheques received

D. Boddy	Main Hall & Pavilion hire 10 – 12.03	323.00
Allotment & Garden Assoc.	Pavilion hire	10.50
Mr. Porter	Pavilion hire	28.00
Mr. Kingslake	Main Hall & Pavilion hire	48.00
Mrs. Devine	Main Hall & Pavilion hire	54.00
Mr. Boddy	Main Hall & Pavilion hire	<u>26.00</u>
		<u>489.50</u>

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

- **The meeting closed at 2138.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2003.**