

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 10th September 2003

Present:	Mr. N. Poulton (Chairman)	Mr. D. Stock (Vice-Chairman)
	Mr. C. Clark	Mr. V. Dunhill (after 1914 until 2125)
	Mr. D. Filer	Mrs. H. McCash
	Mr. J. Meischke	Mr. M. Smith (after 1916)

1 Apologies for absence

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

2 Declaration of Interests

Mrs. McCash declared a prejudicial interest in item 8 a i, Planning application - 83 Hazeldell, 2-storey rear extension (on page 9 of these minutes).

Mrs. McCash will therefore leave the meeting when the item is discussed.

Mr. Meischke declared a personal interest in item 12, Accounts/Correspondence – cheque drawn in the name of Watton Service Station (on page 15 of these minutes).

Mr. Meischke will remain at the meeting when this item is discussed.

3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

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

- i) **Hazeldell footpaths** - This item to be discussed under 6 k, Specific Items (on page 5 of these minutes).
- ii) **68 Hazeldell** - This item to be discussed under 6 l, Specific Items (on pages 5 and 6 of these minutes).
- iii) **Letter from Forest Enterprise** re access to Bramfield Wood. This item to be discussed under 9 k, Correspondence received (on page 13 of these minutes).
- iv) **Letter from Mr. and Mrs. Maskall** re the removal of a tree in their property. This item to be under 9 l, Correspondence received (on page 14 of these minutes).

4 Report from P C John Ivens re policing matters

Mr. Poulton welcomed PC Ivens to report on police matters in the village

The crime figures for the period 1st April to 31st August 2003 show that 195 items were reported to the police in the Watton-at-Stone area (this includes Whempstead, the A602 from Heath Mount School to Hooks Cross, including the Three Horse Shoes public house).

- April 36 incidents
- May 33 incidents
- June 52 incidents
- July 38 incidents
- August 36 incidents

56 of these in items were offences, 8 arrests took place.

PC Ivens said that the police had told Hertfordshire Highways that they support a no-right-turn on the Mill Lane junction with the A602.

The mobile police unit has visited the village to give people advice on policing issues.

Parish Councillors expressed their concern about vehicles speeding in the High Street. Mr. Stock commented on how effective the temporary speed-warning signs appeared to be in Stapleford and suggested that Watton-at-Stone could benefit from a similar system. PC Ivens said that the police had mobile speed-warning equipment, which is currently being used in Walkern. He agreed to install it in Watton-at-Stone when they have finished using it in Walkern. It was also agreed that, although the national speed limit applied, the mobile speed-warning equipment could be used in Whempstead to slow drivers down. (The equipment can be set to trigger at any given speed.)

PC Ivens agreed that a meeting between the police, Hertfordshire Highways and the Parish Council to discuss the speeding problems in the parish would be beneficial.

PC Ivens agreed to give the Parish Council the dates when the mobile police unit is scheduled to visit the area.

The Clerk to chase PC Ivens.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Dunhill arrived at the meeting.

The car-parking problem in Hazeldell was discussed. In particular, the parking on the “keep-clear” sign and parking on the pavements thus causing an obstruction.

It was agreed to write to the residents in and around the entrance to Hazeldell asking them to ensure that they do not cause an obstruction. This letter to be copied to PC Ivens and Inspector Rawle. **Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Smith arrived at the meeting.

The enforcement of byelaws was discussed with PC Ivens.

Mr. Poulton said that the Parish Council is very disappointed about the vandalism that took place during the Summer Play Scheme and the lack of a police presence during this period. Approximately £1,000 worth damage was done to the Community Hall and surrounding area. PC Ivens said that he visited the Summer Play Scheme on the second day and spoke to Tilly Andrews, the EHDC play scheme coordinator.

PC Ivens agreed to tell Inspector Pat Rawle of the Parish Council’s disappointment about the lack of police presence during the Summer Play Scheme.

PC Ivens left the meeting at 7.24 pm.

5 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9th July 2003**

The following amendment was made to the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 9th July 2003.

- Page 1, Item 4 a, Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11th June 2003, first paragraph, first line.

‘The following amendment was made to the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 14th May 2003.’

should read,

The following amendment was made to the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 11th June 2003.

- Page 2, Item 4 b, Review of actions - Find out the listing of work priorities from Hertfordshire Highways, first subordinate bullet,

‘Hazeldell construction’ should read, ‘Hazeldell footpaths’.

Eighth, subordinate bullet, first sentence, penultimate word,

‘curb’ should read, ‘kerb’.

- Page 5, Item 5 a, Specific Items – Traffic Calming, first paragraph, fifth line,

‘Bennington’ should read ‘Benington’.

- Pages 5 and 6, Item 5 e, Specific Items – Purchase and presentation of Trophies, first paragraph, second line,

‘She showed Parish Councillors the trophies’

should read,

‘She showed Parish Councillors the trophy’.

Penultimate paragraph, first line,

‘At the Parish Council meeting held on 11th June it was agreed not purchase ‘keep-sake’ trophies’

should read,

‘At the Parish Council meeting held on 11th June it was agreed not to purchase ‘keep-sake’ trophies’.

- Page 9, Item 6 a, Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee – Tennis Courts, first paragraph, first line,

‘Mr. Stock’ should read, ‘Mr. Poulton’.

- Page 12, Item 7 a i, Planning applications, third paragraph, first line

‘No objections were raised by Parish Councillors raised’ should read,

‘No objections were raised by Parish Councillors’.

- Page 10, Items for Parish News, delete third bullet,

‘Home to School Transport Policy’.

Mr. Filer proposed that the minutes as amended 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

- **Copy Parish Councillors with annual return for the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31.03.03**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 7 a, Budget & Finance Sub-Committee - Annual return and audit of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31st March 2003 (on page 6 of these minutes).

- **Chase WAGN for a response to our request for a revised sign that points to the WAGN parking area**
The Clerk sent an e-mail to Norma Unwin (WAGN) on 30th July, asking for a response to our letters of the 3rd and 27th June requesting that the wording of the sign that points to the WAGN parking area at Watton-at-Stone Railway Station be revised.

The following response was received from Norma Unwin on 8th August.

‘I do not remember receiving these letters, but I will arrange for the sign to point in the right direction.’

It was agreed to monitor the situation and that this item should remain on the agenda under Specific Items until the matter has been resolved. **Agenda: 10/03**

- **Update Parish Councillors on items contained in work priorities list from Hertfordshire Highways**

Mr. Poulton said he had nothing further to report.

- **Return completed change of signature forms to Co-op Bank**

This action point has been completed.

- **Place on circulation documents obtained at EHDC Summer Conference on 8th July 2003**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to Mr. Mould re delivery date for the Ornate village sign**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 6 c, Ornate village sign (on page 4 of these minutes).

- **Purchase two ‘keep-sake’ trophies**

Mr. Poulton reported that Mrs. Dinnin had ordered the two ‘keep-sake’ trophies and will be collecting them and presenting them to Lucy Jenkins (from the Scout and Guide Rainbow Group) and Miss Casey Crossley (Watton-at-Stone primary school) on her return from holiday. **Action: C. Dinnin**

- **Contact McCash and Hay re audit of Community Hall accounts for the year ended 31st March 2003**

This action point has been completed.

- **Return signed copy of audited Community Hall accounts to McCash and Hay**

This action point has been completed.

- **Accept Mr. Monk’s price for High street flowerbed maintenance for 2004**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to Mrs. Graham, Mr. Taylor and Mr. Welch re staining of the MPPA kicker boards**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to Ted Brown and Adam Welch re strimming work on the allotments**

This action point has been completed.

- **Accept Gary Smith’s quotation for window cleaning at the Community Hall**

This action point has been completed.

- **Notify Mr. Welch of agreed changes to grass cutting and strimming work**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to the occupants of 90 – 92 High Street re Trees overhanging the footpath in the High Street**

Mr. Poulton said that Mrs. Dinnin inspected the trees, outside 90 – 92 High Street, the day after the Parish Council meeting held on 9th July and found that they had already been cut back. This action point was therefore not carried-out.

- **Ask the Football Club to move the football bars**

This action point has been completed.

- **Ask David Bunyan to repair broken vent grille at Community Hall**

This action point has been completed and the broken grille has been repaired.

- **Write to EHDC Planning department re 17 Lammas Road**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to EHDC Planning department re Yard at side of Ballacraigne, Walkern Road**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to Hertfordshire Highways re request for removal of guard railing outside 130 High Street**

This action point has been completed.

- **Place letter from EHDC re planning decision for the Coach House on circulation**

This action point has been completed.

- **Send a letter of thanks to the Conservation society re donation towards new litterbin for the village**
This action point has been completed.
- **Contact Mr. Love re disused piece of allotment land**
This action point has been completed.
Refer to item 10, Reports from other organisations - Watton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association (on page 14 of these minutes).
- **Write to Diocesan board re piece of land for additional Tennis Court**
This action point has been completed.
Refer to item 7 a, Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee – Tennis Courts.
- **Write to PC Ivens re regular police visits to the village during the summer holidays**
This action point has been completed.
Refer to item 4, Report from P C John Ivens re policing matters (on pages 1 and 2 of these minutes).
- **Write Parish News articles**
This action point has been completed.

c) Action points outstanding for more than two months

None.

6 Specific Items

a) Traffic-calming in Whempstead

This item was discussed under item 4, Report from P C John Ivens re policing matters (on pages 1 and 2 of these minutes).

b) Speed of traffic in High Street

This item was discussed under item 4, Report from P C John Ivens re policing matters (on pages 1 and 2 of these minutes).

c) Ornate village sign

The Clerk said that Mr. Mould had informed her in late August that he would start work on the sign on his return from holiday in the first week of September. The work is expected to take approximately six weeks.

Mr. Mould spoke to the Clerk again yesterday and confirmed that he was about to start work on the sign.

This item to remain on the agenda.

Agenda: 10.03

d) Footpath adjacent to Bull public house

The Clerk e-mailed Valerie Weaver (Hertfordshire Highways) on 1st September asking for a progress report re our request to have the footpath adjacent to the Bull public house dedicated as a right of way. No response has been received to date.

e) Watton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association

This item to be discussed under item 10, Reports from other organisations (on page 14 of these minutes).

f) Update on ‘Home to School Transport’

Mr. Poulton said that he had met with Mrs Davies to discuss the responses received from Parish Councils in the East Herts area to our letter about the Home to School Transport policy.

Mr. Poulton and Mrs Davies will meet with Brian Hammond on 15th September (in the Community Hall).

This item to remain on the agenda.

Agenda: 10/03

g) Time for public participation

Mr. Poulton said that the Parish Council should consider public participation during their meetings.

After discussion, it was agreed that members of the public will be allowed to speak at Parish Council meetings. The item allowed is to be decided on an ad-hock basis.

This item to be placed on the agenda each month after apologies for absence.

Action: J. Allsop

h) Byelaws – camping

It was agreed that any Parish Councillor can give people permission to camp on the Lammas and Watton Green. The Clerk to be notified accordingly and she will then inform all other Parish Councillors via the e-mail.

It was agreed that any site visit, by the Parish Council, associated with enforcing the byelaws must be undertaken by at least two Parish Councillors.

i) EHDC – Comprehensive performance assessment workshop held on 4th September

Mr. Clark reported that he had attended this event on behalf of the Parish Council at Castle Hall, Hertford, on Thursday 4th September 2003.

The Comprehensive Performance Assessment program is a Government initiative which requires all local authorities to undergo a Council-wide inspection process to determine how well it is meeting its obligations to its citizens. It results in the Council being awarded from zero to three stars. Although conducted by external inspectors, the process is basically a self-assessment process run by the Council itself. The inspectors receive the self-assessment report, investigate its findings, the quality of evidence presented and finally awards the star rating.

EHDC is preparing its position statement in advance of the inspection to be held in January 2004.

Part of the process requires the Council to consult its "partner" organisations to seek their views on the Council's operations and any requirements for improvement. This is not solely about the quality of service provided, but also opinions on its plans, leadership of the community, how well it communicates and so on.

The objective of the workshop was for the Council to explain the CPA process and to seek the delegate's views on how well it was doing in a number of different areas, such as communications, strategic planning etc.

The workshop was run by officers of the Council and attended by a variety of organisations who do business with it, such as Town and Parish Councils, suppliers, other agencies e.g. the Police as well as District Councillors and officers of the Council.

He said he would not go into details of the findings here, because they will be published by EHDC in full in due course. However, he said it was a useful event to attend provided that the Council act upon the weaknesses identified and make good their promises for improvement.

Once the result of CPA is published and the number of stars announced the Council will publish an Action Plan setting out how it is to implement the necessary improvements. These will be monitored on an annual basis by the re-running of the CPA process.

j) Seats in High Street

Mr. Poulton said that the following benches in the High Street were damaged.

- **Bench outside Willowdene and adjacent to 51c High Street**

Mr. Poulton spent £7.90 on purchasing wood and screws from Jewsons and then repaired the bench.

- **Bench outside the Grey House/roundabout with Great Innings**

Mr. Poulton said that the screws used to secure the wood of this seat to the concrete structure had perished, although the concrete frame and all the woodwork were sound. If the remains of the screws can be drilled-out and replaced, the seat will be serviceable again.

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke agreed to inspect the seat with a view to repairing it.

Action: N. Poulton/J. Meischke

k) Hazeldell footpaths

Mr. Stock said that Hertfordshire Highways had marked-up the footpaths in Hazeldell ready for the scheduled resurfacing work in October/ November. However, there have been many problems in Hazeldell with the British Telecom (BT) cabling, resulting in the footpaths being dug-up at various locations. Mrs. Knight (47 Hazeldell) has been without her BT phone-line for two months and has approached our MP, Oliver Heald, to get BT to replace all the cables in Hazeldell. Mr. Stock said that it would not be sensible for Hertfordshire Highways to resurface the footpaths before BT resolve their problems in Hazeldell.

Mr. Poulton read out an e-mail from Valerie Weaver (Hertfordshire Highways) which said that Hertfordshire Highways had agreed to liaise with BT and will only carry-out the resurfacing of the footpaths in Hazeldell when all the cabling problems in the area have been resolved. Paul Patmore is the Hertfordshire Highways contact for this project.

l) Grass verge on Station Road adjacent to 68 Hazeldell

Mr. Stock reminded Parish Councillors that we wrote to Hertfordshire Highways at the end of last year regarding the land adjacent to the boundary of 68 Hazeldell on Station Road. We requested that Hertfordshire Highways remove the brambles completely (including their roots) from the site and continue to maintain the land in a grassed state. Mr. Stock noted that they did not remove all the roots and as a result the brambles are growing back.

Mr. Stock said that it would be more sensible and cost-effective to remove the roots completely and thus avoid the ongoing cost of cutting the brambles on a regular basis.

Mrs. McCash said that she was present when the contractors started to grub-out the roots of the brambles. However, Mr and Mrs Chesterman (68 Hazeldell) had asked them to stop doing the work in case it damaged their fence.

It was agreed to write to Hertfordshire Highways asking them to cut back the brambles. **Action: J. Allsop**

7 Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

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

- **Annual return and audit of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31st March 2003**

Mr. Filer said that Mr. Morrissey completed, signed and dated (14th July 2003) sections 1 and 4 of the annual return for the year ended 31st March 2003 (all Parish Councillors have been given a copy of the completed annual return).

Mr. Filer proposed that section 2 of the annual return (i.e. statement of assurance) be approved by the Parish Council and that the Chairman and the Clerk sign the annual return. Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Mr. Poulton and the Clerk duly signed the annual return and the attached statement of assurance.

The Clerk to return all relevant documentation to Lubbock Fine.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Overtime and expenditures under £100**

All Parish Councillors were recently e-mailed asking for their approval to pay Ted Brown for extra litterpicking duties carried-out during the summer holidays. Mr. Filer said such approval should not be necessary, i.e. because if the work is required, he should be paid automatically.

After discussion, Mr. Filer proposed that any expenditure under £100 did not require authorisation of the full Parish Council, but of two members of the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee only. Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Community Hall Trustees

- **Confirmation from British Gas that they are now supplying the Community Hall's electricity**

Business Gas had now confirmed that they are supplying the Community Hall's electricity.

- **Date for next meeting**

The date for the next Community Hall Trustees meeting is Tuesday 16th September at 1900.

Recreation & Amenities

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

- **Safety- surface under small swings and see-saw**

The safety-surface under the swings has been replaced by Wicksteed Leisure and the area is now looking very good. Mr. Meischke said that we would be submitting a claim for the work to Cornhill Insurance for payment. However, he is chasing Wicksteed Leisure to provide a revised invoice because the one produced differs from that submitted to Cornhill Insurance.

Action: J. Meischke

- **Condition of the small swings (i.e. seats, paintwork and squeaking parts)**

Mr. Meischke said that Ted Brown has given us a quote (9th September) of £35 to:

- paint the framework of the infants swings and base of the seesaw
- make good the edge of the play area and clean the tennis courts.

Mr. Meischke proposed that Mr. Brown's quotation be accepted, Mr. Filer seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Mr. Poulton to inform Mr. Brown accordingly.

Action: N. Poulton

- **Showers**

Mr. Meischke said that Turners had replaced the faulty pressure-control valve and the showers are now working well.

- **Tennis Courts**

The staining of the kicker-boards has now been completed. Mr. Meischke said that Julie Graham's quote was based on the wood not requiring cleaning. However, the Sadolin we provided requires the wood to be cleaned thoroughly before application. She has therefore submitted an invoice of £223.13 as follows.

- Work as per original quotation - £195
- Additional labour required to meet specification of material supplied (Sadolin) - £20
- Additional cleaning material purchased, (from Summans, not supplied by yourselves) for preparation of panels -£8.13

Mr. Meischke proposed that Mrs. Graham's invoice be paid. Mr. Filer seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Summer play scheme**

Mr. Meischke said that had been numerous problems during the Summer Play Scheme this year and complaints were received on a daily basis. The following damage occurred to the Community Hall.

1. Two windows were broken, one high-level and the other in the pavilion, which allowed vandals to gain access to the Community Hall. No internal damage was done during the break-in.
2. The internal toilets were blocked with paper and required unblocking by David Bunyan on two occasions.
3. Some of the blinds in the pavilion were damaged.

EHDC is to be charged for the costs involved, with the exception of the repair of the high-level window.

In addition, the lock-pulls on the outside toilets were vandalised.

Mr. Meischke said that the leaders of the Summer Play Scheme, although very enthusiastic about their work, appeared to be too young and inexperienced. He said that before the start of the 2004 Summer Play Scheme he will arrange to meet with the leaders.

All incidents of vandalism were reported to the police. However, it was disappointing that due to staff shortage they were in little evidence.

- **Damage to fence**

The post-and-rail fence on the far side of the sportsfield was vandalised during the period that the Summer Play Scheme was taking place. This damage was reported to the police.

Ted Brown has submitted a quotation of £84.66 for the repair of the fence. Mr. Meischke proposed that the quotation be accepted. Mr. Filer seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Mr. Brown to be notified accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

Environment

Mr. Poulton read out Mrs. Dinnin's report on the following items concerning the Environment Sub-Committee.

- **Byelaw notice boards for Watton Green and the Lammas**

Mr. Stanley has installed the byelaw notice boards on Watton Green and the Lammas.

- **Trees on Lammas**

A branch from the Willow tree at the Mill Lane end of the Lammas is down. Mr. Poulton said that it is lying behind the bench-seat and is not dangerous, but needs clearing as soon as possible.

It was agreed to obtain quotations from Ted Brown and Adam Welch.

Action: N. Poulton/J. Allsop

A tree on the Lammas riverbank has blown over into Mrs. Brenda Marshall's garden (19 Lammas Road) Mrs. Dinnin has told Mrs. Marshall that the Environment Agency will remove the tree when they carry-out work to other trees along the riverbank. This work is due to take place at the end of September.

- **Grass cutting - Lammas and Watton Green**

Because of the dry weather, the grass on the Lammas and Watton Green does not require cutting at present.

It was agreed to review the situation during the Parish Council meeting to be held on 8th October 2003.

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- **Bonfires on the allotments**

This item to be discussed under 10 Reports from other Organisations.

Note: In error, this item was not raised under Reports from other Organisations.

This item to be placed on the October agenda under Environment Sub-Committee.

Agenda: 10/03

b) Sportsfield

i) Report

Mr. Filer carried-out the sportsfield report on the 9th September 2003, accompanied by Mr. Smith, the result of which is as follows.

- **Sportsfield:**

Condition of grass	Brown – needs some rain, goal area growing well.
Litter	OK.
Dog fouling	OK.
Netball posts	OK.
General	Nice new storage shed.

- **Children's Play Area:**

Condition of surface	Good.
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	All being well used when I inspected.
• Bike ramps area:	
Junior Jump	OK }
Double Ramp	OK } All mats embedded in ground.
Fun Box	OK }
• Community Hall:	
General Condition (Exterior)	Being painted with Sadolin.
Litterbin	OK.
Car Park	OK.
General	Good.
• Multi-Purpose Play Area:	
Surface	OK, but a lot of acorns.
Boundary Fencing	OK.
Tennis nets	OK.
Litter	OK.
General	Tree near lights needs trimming back. Kicker-boards – good.
• Great Innings Play Area:	
Equipment	OK.
Surfaces	Mats loose at top of slide.
Litter	Very little.
Dog fouling	None.
Comments	A nice area.
• Allotments Area:	
Access	OK.
Condition of paths between Allotments	Good.
Condition of Allotments under cultivation	Most well cultivated.
Condition of Allotments not under cultivation	Overgrown.
Litter	Very little litter.
Comments	Church Walk hedge needs trimming. Dog fouling on verges.
• Culverts on Mill Lane	
Litter and rubbish in and around Culverts	Very overgrown.
Dog-fouling	None.
Comments	Good condition.
• Salt bins	
Perrywood Lane	OK.
Entrance to Great Innings	OK.
Great Innings South – outside number 93	OK.
Station Road	OK.
Moorymead Close	OK.
Hazeldell	OK.
• Dog-waste bins	
Footpath 17	OK.
Sportsfield	OK.
Church Walk	OK.
Walkern Road	Not checked.
Station Road	OK.
High Street (by Memorial)	OK.
Great Innings	OK.
Mill Lane	OK.
• General Comments	
	-
• Acorns on MPPA	

Ted Brown to remove acorns – see item 7 a, Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee - Condition of the small swings (on page 6 of these minutes).

- **Safety-matting on slide at Great Innings Play Area**

It was agreed to write to EHDC informing them that the safety-matting at the top of the slide is loose.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Dog-fouling on Church Walk**

Mrs. McCash said that there is one particular dog that regularly fouls Church Walk while unattended. Mr. Poulton said that if she is sure who owns the dog, she should contact Mike Abbey (EHDC dog warden) to report the matter.

- **Hedge cutting**

Mr. Poulton confirmed that the Church Walk hedge is due to be cut in late September.

- **Crack in pavilion glass door**

Mr. Stock said that he had noticed that there is a crack in the pavilion glass door to the sportsfield. Mr. Poulton said that he had inspected the crack and it was superficial and required no attention.

- **Sportsfield Gate**

Mr. Poulton said that Sodexo had removed the sportsfield gate to gain access to the field, but had not put it back. They have now promised to re-hang the gate in the next few days.

Mr. Poulton to chase.

Action: N. Poulton

ii) **Weekly report and action**

Mr. Poulton said there was nothing to report from Ted Browns weekly inspections.

8 Planning

a) Applications

i) **83 Hazeldell**

2-storey rear extension

Mrs. McCash left the meeting while this item was discussed.

Mr. Poulton said that he visited the neighbours on both sides and to the rear of this property. The only objections were received from Mr. and Mrs. McCash, who live next door at number 85.

Mr. Poulton then read out a letter from Mr. and Mrs. McCash to the planning department.

The McCash's objections are that there is insufficient parking for a four-bedroom house and the application is an over development of an already overbuilt area. In addition, because the garden is on such an acute hill, where is the soak away gong to be placed? Because to the left of the property there is a footpath to the terraced houses and to the right is the McCash's property, which already has flooding problems from the house up the hill (i.e. at the top of their garden).

Mr. Poulton instructed the Clerk to write to the Planning Department as follows.

‘Watton at Stone Parish Council would like to make the following observation with regards the proposed planning application at 83 Hazeldell.

It is noted from this application that it is proposed to convert the property into a four-bedroom house with no extra provisions for parking.

There is a great deal of concern over parking on this estate especially as a large majority of residents have converted their garages into living accommodation.

Currently a large amount of cars park on the roadside making it impossible for the emergency services to reach any incident.

The Parish Council feels that this proposed development would aggravate that situation.

It would be appreciated if these comments could be taken into account when determining this application.’

Parish Councillors agreed with the decision.

Mrs. McCash returned to the meeting.

ii) **14 Hazeldell**

Ground floor single-storey front extension

This item to be discussed with the item below, 16 Hazeldell.

iii) **16 Hazeldell**

New lean-to roof to replace existing flat roof to ground

Mr. Stock said that the two applications, which are similar to others that had been granted in Hazeldell, were a great improvement to the properties and therefore so no reason for us to object. He asked the

Clerk to write to the Planning Department stating that the Parish Council has no comment on these applications. This she did.

Parish Councillors agreed with the decision.

iv) Crowbury, Church Lane – Amended plans

Conservatory and terrace swimming pool, pool house garden terracing and ancillary works

Mr. Filer looked at the plans for this application and made comments. The plans together with Mr. Filers comment were then placed on high-speed circulation and the following letter was sent to the Planning Department on 26th August.

‘Although the Parish Council has no objections to the subject application, it does make the following comments.

1. The proposed style of the conservatory is very large and increases the overall house/site area very considerably.
2. Watton Green seems to have been identified as the site of the 'old cottages' rather than the much larger area on the opposite side of Perrywood Lane.
3. There is an existing access shown at the entrance to Crowbury Field (H1710/05) which has recently been partially covered with tarmac. This was originally just a gate entry to the field and seems to be unsuitable as road access into the field.
4. Although a tennis court is shown on the drawing, it is not mentioned on the planning application. Does it require planning permission?
5. In accordance with its general policy, the Parish Council asks that adequate and appropriate tree planting is undertaken to replace those trees removed as part of he development.’

Parish Councillors viewed the amended plans and agreed to write as before to the Planning Department. The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

v) Bardolphs Farm

Installation of replacement 30 M tower to be used to telecommunications purposes

All Parish Councillors were sent an e-mail informing them about the above application and asking for comments. Because no objections were received, the Clerk to wrote to the Planning Department stating that the Parish Council has no comment on this application.

Mr. Stock did say that he did not feel that we had any reason to object because we have previously requested that existing sites, such as this one, should be used in preference to new sites.

vi) 17 Lammas Road - Amended

Single storey front extension

Mr. Poulton said that Mrs. Dinnin had visited the neighbours and showed them the original version of this application, and they had had not objections. The only change is the installation of a front door. In the previous plan, entry to the house would be at the side of the property. Mrs. Dinnin also consulted Mr. Knight about the plans and then 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.

vii)The Old Post Office, 130 High Street

Internal modifications, installation of new windows and French door

Mr. Dunhill said that he had visited the neighbouring properties. The only concern raised was that one of the proposed new windows would overlook the adjacent property. Mr. Dunhill said that existing shrubbery would prevent any visibility into the adjoining property.

Mr. Stock said that the Conservation Society were concerned about the parking bay because it would have a dangerous exit. He told them that if the parking bay is a potential danger, Hertfordshire Highways will act upon it.

Parish Councillors looked at the plans and agreed to write to EHDC informing them that the Parish Council has no comment on this application.

Action: J. Allsop

viii)59 Great Innings North

Attached garage/driveway

Parish Councillors looked at the plans and agreed to write to EHDC informing them that the Parish Council has no comment on this application.

Action: J. Allsop

b) Decisions

i) 121 High Street

Illuminated shop sign (retrospective)

- EHDC –permission granted

- ii) **Yard at side of Ballacraigne, Walkern Road**
To use to park 7.5 ton lorry and keep scaffold materials 1 Motts Close- EHDC –permission refused
- iii) **Flat 5, Watton House**
Second-floor roof and dormer extension - EHDC –permission granted
- iv) **126 High Street**
Conservatory - EHDC –permission granted
- v) **Heathmount School**
Proposed changing pavilion - EHDC –permission granted
- vi) **Blue Bury Farm**
Agricultural building - EHDC –permission granted
- vii) **1 Hazeldell**
2-storey side extension - EHDC –permission refused
- viii) **Blue Hill Farm, land and buildings at High Elms Lane**
Change of use and conversion of farm buildings into 4 no residential units and office and demolition of farmhouse - EHDC –permission granted
Parish Councillors repeated their concern about the granting of this application. After discussion, it agreed to write to Paul Rossington (EHDC) inviting him to speak at a Parish Council meeting on general planning and in particular the granting of two applications (i.e. the Couch House and Blue Hill Farm).
Action: J. Allsop
- ix) **36 Hazeldell**
Single storey front extension including garage conversion - EHDC –permission granted
- x) **Moor Bridge, TL 296 198, Walkern Road**
Strengthening of Moor Bridge - EHDC –permission granted
Mr. and Mrs. Taylor who live in Beane Cottage (which is adjacent to the Moor Bridge) have asked if the Parish Council would cut back the weeds and brambles, on the land they donated to them, down to the riverbank. Youngsters are hiding under the bridge and they believe could be taking drugs. Cutting back the weeds and brambles would help prevent youngsters using the area because they would be visible.
Mr. Poulton said that the contractors, Mouchel, who are carrying-out the bridge strengthening works, have installed a pedestrian footpath on Parish Council land without our permission. Mr. Poulton has spoken to the contactors, who have verbally agreed to cut back all the weeds and brambles for no charge.
It was agreed to write to Mouchel informing them that they are using the Parish Council land without permission.
Action: N. Poulton/J. Allsop
- xi) **18 Lammass Road**
Ground floor and first floor side extension - EHDC –permission granted
- c) **Appeal decisions**
 - i) **Agricultural Barn, Whempstead Road, Whempstead**
Alteration and resubmission of existing application - Planning Inspectorate - Appeal dismissed
 - ii) **Dwelling house, Whempstead Road, Whempstead**
Alteration and resubmission of existing application - Planning Inspectorate - Appeal dismissed

9 Correspondence received

a) Churches Serving Watton re Community Hall Service in July 2003

Rodney Ranzetta has written on behalf of the Churches Serving Watton to thank the Parish Council for the use of the sportsfield and Community Hall facilities during the Community Service held on 6th July.

The service was well attended and raised £217 towards the purchase of bibles for school-leavers from Watton-at-Stone. They were able to purchase all the bibles required for this year and have a small surplus left over for next year.

b) Hertfordshire Highways – Tree outside 95 Hazeldell

John Hanmore (95 Hazeldell) contacted Mrs. Dinnin concerning a tree outside his house that he feels needs removing because it is leaning towards lamppost number 19. The Clerk wrote to Hertfordshire Highways asking them to inspect the tree and, if it is removed, requesting that it is replaced with a tree of a similar type during the autumn/winter-planting season.

Hertfordshire Highways responded (letter dated 1st September) as follows.

‘Tree outside 95 Hazeldell

Thank you for your letter dated 10th August 1003 regarding the above.

I will arrange for this tree problem to be added to the list of outstanding matters to be inspected by the County Councils Arboriculturists.

As soon as the result is available I will inform you of his findings.

Just for your financial records, we are unable to replant any trees removed due to this years financial constraints.'

Mr. Stock said that because of our policy regarding lost/damaged trees, we need to find an alternative source/method of funding for replacement trees.

It was agreed to defer this item to the Environment Sub-Committee for discussion.

Mrs. McCash said that some of the residents in Hazeldell would be happy to plant a tree in the grass verges near their properties. However, they have been informed by HCC that they cannot do this.

c) Hertfordshire Highways – re Markings at entrance of Hazeldell

Mr. Poulton read out a letter from Valerie Weaver (Hertfordshire Highways) dated 17th July.

'Thank you for your letter of 17th June regarding the above.

I will now add this to the list of outstanding problems for your Parish Council, requiring investigation and a solution.

I cannot say at present when this will be done but will be receiving the list in the next month.

Thank you again for your views on this matter.'

Mr. Stock said that this was a very disappointing response.

This item to be placed on the agenda for the Parish Council meeting to be held on 12th November 2003 for review.

Agenda: 11/03

d) CDA – Annual General Meeting on 17th September, 12 noon – 3.30 pm

Mr. Poulton said that he would be attending the CDA's Annual General meeting on 17th September. No other Parish Councillors are able to attend.

Action: N. Poulton

e) EHDC – proposals for seminars on Code of Conduct and Quality of Town/Parish Council initiatives

Jeff Hughes, of EHDC, has written (letter dated 23rd July) to inform us that he is proposing to hold a seminar on administrative/legal matters concerning the Model Code of Conduct in October/November 2003. He asks if members of the Parish Council would attend such a seminar.

The Standards Board for England booklet and video on the Code of Conduct has been on circulation. Mr. Poulton noted from comments made by Parish Councillors that the video has caused more concern.

After discussion, it was agreed to write to Jeff Hughes to say that the Parish Council would be interested in attending a seminar.

Action: J. Allsop

f) CDA Herts – Active Parishes project

After a brief discussion it was agreed not to pursue this item.

g) BT Payphones

A letter from British Telecom (dated 15th July) concerning the removal of payphones with low usage went on high-speed circulation during August. The following response was then sent to British Telecom on 21st August.

'Subject: Payphone number 01920 830213

Dear Mr. Thompson,

The Watton-at-Stone Parish Council does not want to see the subject payphone removed.

Although we understand your reasons for considering its removal, this particular payphone is sited near the railway station and provides a valuable service to commuters and school children when trains are delayed or cancelled.

Likewise, the children from the nearby primary school use the payphone as they leave the school.'

British Telecom wrote to the Parish Council on dated 8th September to inform us that because of the low-level usage of the subject telephone box (i.e. less than 20% of what they would normally expect from a public payphone) they would like to proceed with its removal. If they do not hear from us by 29th September, they will assume that their proposals are acceptable to the Parish Council and will therefore proceed with the work.

Parish Councillors agreed to accept BT's decision. No further action is required.

h) Maurice Gordon re Lammas trees and the Moor Bridge

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter, dated 2nd September, from Maurice Gordon.

‘Tree Maintenance – River Beane

I understand that the Environment Agency are proposing to carry out essential maintenance work to the trees and bushes on the Lammas side of the River Beane during September this year as a flood prevention measure.

I can understand the need for the work but I am concerned for the following reasons:

- That the tree clearance is selective to maintain the current level of privacy and security for residents of Lammas Road
- That all dead wood is removed
- That the natural habitat of the river wildlife (e.g. ducks, moorhens, Kingfishers, water rats etc) is preserved.

The removal of the nest sites often at the base of the trees near the bank will discourage much of the wildlife and they will be lost.

I therefore trust that this work will be undertaken sympathetically and request the Parish Council contact the Environment Agency to establish that their Ecologist has been involved in the planning of this work

Finally, may I request that residents of Lammas Road are notified when this work is to commence and whether a representative of the Parish Council will be present to oversee the activities of the contractor

Moor Bridge -Walkern Road

I am aware this work has started but question whether the opportunity has been explored by the Parish Council to seek the widening of the bridge or the provision of a separate permanent footbridge. I understood this to be the long-term intention in the past but perhaps you could advise me of the current position.

I trust you will be able to put these views to the next meeting of the Parish Council.’

It was agreed to send a copy of the part of Mr. Gordon’s letter relating to tree maintenance to the Environment Agency. Mr. Gordon to be notified accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**

With reference to Mr. Gordon’s comments on the Moor Bridge, it was agreed to inform him that the Parish Council, in liaison with the Hertfordshire Highways, had in the past considered and rejected this option.

Action: J. Allsop

i) Hertfordshire Homeless Group

This item to be placed on circulation.

Action: J. Allsop

j) Parishes for Rural Environment Protection (PREP) meeting – 17th October 2003

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke said that they would try to attend the PREP meeting on 17th October.

The Clerk to ask Mrs. Dinnin if she is able to attend.

Action: J. Allsop

k) Forest Enterprise re access to Bramfield Wood

Mr. Poulton read out a letter dated 5th September from Forest Enterprise.

‘Re: Public access in Bramfield Woods

It is with a certain amount of regret I write to inform the Parish Council that the permissive access provided within the main area of woodland called Bramfield Woods will be discontinued. Unfortunately, due to illegal motorbike and horse riding activities and the requirements of the shoot, the landowner has instructed us to extinguish the car park and waymarked trail.

Obviously public access will be unaffected along the public rights of way, however, persons found using the woodland for whatever purpose away from these routes may be subject to prosecution.

This situation is not one Forest Enterprise is particularly enthusiastic about, however this is a leased wood and as such we must comply with the instructions of our landowner and the legal requirements of the lease.

I would be extremely grateful if you could pass this message onto your parish members and if you would like to discuss any issue concerning this matter or the woodland generally, I would be happy to hear from you.’

Mr. Stock said that he would give a copy of this letter to the conservation Society. **Action: D. Stock**

l) Mr. and Mrs. Maskall -re the removal of a tree in their property

Mr. Poulton read out a letter (dated 3rd September) from Mr. and Mrs Maskall of 9 Rectory Lane. They inform us of their intention to thin and prune the Ash tree that is on the boundary of their garden and the

sportsfield. Subject to permission being granted from the planning department, they will be asking a tree surgeon to carry out the work.

It was agreed to write to Mr. and Mrs. Maskall thanking them for telling us.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Meischke said that Mr. and Mr. Wilson (of Glebe House) had some tree surgery carried-out by David D'Arcy while they were away from their property. Unfortunately, Mr. D'Arcy left wood chippings on the sportsfield which they have asked him to clear.

Trees in Perrywood Lane

Mr. Filer said that trees cut down by May Gurney Construction Ltd during the structural repair work carried out to the Railway Bridge in Perrywood Lane have failed to re-grow.

It was agreed to write to Railtrack informing them of the situation and asking them to plant new trees during the 2003 autumn/winter planting season.

Action: J. Allsop

10 Reports from other Organisations

• **Watton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association**

Mr. Poulton said that he and Mrs. Dinnin attended a meeting of the Allotment and Garden Association on 1st September in the Community Hall.

At the meeting the following issues were discussed.

- **Rabbit control** – they request that the Parish Council contact the owners/occupiers of the properties adjoining the allotments (i.e. The Chestnuts, Kimberley and the Diocesan Board), because these are the main sources of the rabbit problem, asking if they would be willing to allow ferreting to be carried-out on their land.
- **Hedge cutting** – the responsibility for the cutting back of the allotment side of the boundary hedge with Glebe Court.
- **Grass cutting** – request that the grass on the ‘conservation area’ be cut back twice a year.
- **Public liability insurance** – the Parish Council find out if the allotment holders are covered under their public liability insurance
- **Allotment tenancy agreements** – they are proposing to draft a tenancy agreement, which would include a section stating that any rented allotment that is not cultivated during a two-year period will automatically be declared vacant.

Mr. Love wrote to the Parish Council on 10th August and 8th September, and Parish Councillors expressed disappointment at the aggressive tone of his correspondence.

It was agreed to write to John Love inviting him and two or three of his members to attend a meeting with Parish Councillors on 23rd September at 2030 to discuss the issues contained in his letters. Mr. Poulton, Mr. Stock, Mr. Filer and Mr. Meischke will attend.

Action: J. Allsop

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

Mr. Meischke said that Mr. Knight had informed him that the Sports and Social Club intend to carry-out an annual maintenance programme on the sportsfield. In 2003, the maintenance programme included deep-probing (known as “earthquaking”) of the surface to improve drainage re seeding, top dressing and applying fertiliser.

They expect similar work to be required in 2004 and would be looking for a donation of approximately £750 (to cover 1/3 of the cost of the work). Mr. Meischke said that we should not agree to this unless we know if the work actually needs doing.

Mr. Dunhill left the meeting.

11 Items for Parish News

Articles on the following items discussed by the Parish Council to be sent to the editor of the Parish News for inclusion in the September issue.

- Public participation
- Removal of the BT telephone box
- Byelaw notices on the Lammas and Watton Green

Mr. Filer agreed to write the articles accordingly.

Action: D. Filer

12 Accounts/Correspondence

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash

Receipts

None

Payments

None

Cheques required

Adam Welch	Grass cutting and strimming work – end of June 2003	139.17
Ted Brown	Strimming allotments	50.00
Adam Welch	Grass cutting and strimming work –22.07.03	139.17
HCC	Lighting energy charges	222.19
Ted Brown	20 hours litterpicking	110.00
J. Allsop	Salary 505.25, Norton antivirus 21.21, phone 51.00	577.46
M. Stanley	Grass cutting and strimming, install notice boards	610.00
Adam Welch	Grass cutting and strimming work –12.08.03	139.17
Ted Brown	21 hours litterpicking	115.50
Ted Brown	5 hours litterpicking - overtime	27.50
J. Allsop	Salary September	505.25
N. Poulton	Materials to repair bench seat in High Street	7.90
		<u>2643.31</u>

Cheques received

Sports & Social	Hire of sportsfield facilities	475.00
		<u>475.00</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash

Receipts

Mr. Keen – Main Hall	160.00
Brenda Marshall – Pavilion hire	56.00
Paula Philips – Pavilion hire	<u>32.00</u>
	<u>248.00</u>

Payments

VAT return 6/03	7.71
C. Bewley – 23 hours	126.50
David Bunyan – unlock toilets	35.25
2 lock pulls for outside toilets	<u>14.10</u>
	<u>183.56</u>

Cheques required

C. Bewley	55 hours cleaning	305.25
David Bunyan	Un-block disabled toilets and repair grille	54.40
C. Bewley	34.5 hours cleaning	189.75
J. A. Turner	To fit value to showers	355.54
Stevenage Glass	Replace two windows	343.51
Watton Service Station	To supply Sadolin, paint brushes, rollers	169.83
HCC	Cleaning materials	79.78
Julie Graham	To Clean and paint kicker boards	<u>223.13</u>
		<u>1721.19</u>

Cheques received

Badminton Club		108.00
EHDC	Summer Play scheme - deposit	100.00
Dave Boddy		324.00
Sports & Social	Hire of Community Hall facilities	475.00
Ms. Thomson	Pavilion hire	28.00
G. Pay	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	80.00
G. Gilbey	Main Hall hire	<u>50.00</u>
		<u>1165.00</u>

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

- **The meeting closed at 2130.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 8th October 2003.**