

**Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2009**

Present:	Mr. J. Meischke (Chairman)	Mr. M. Smith (Vice-Chairman)
	Mr. D. Filer	Mrs. C. Dinnin
	Mr. I. Knight	Mrs. McCash
	Mr. D. Stock	
	The Clerk (Mrs. J. Allsop)	
Public:	None	

**1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Poulton, Mr. Harris and Mr. Clark.

**2 Public Participation**

None.

**3 Declaration of Interests**

None.

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

Mr. Meischke had two additional items for this meeting.

- **Planning application for Watton Methodist Church (3/09/1537/FP/JS)**  
This item to be discussed under 6 a iii, Planning applications.
- **Letter from British Telecom**  
This item to be discussed under item 9 h, Correspondence received.

**5 Minutes of the last meeting**

**a) Acceptance**

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2009**  
Mr. Smith proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.  
Mr. Knight seconded the motion and all present at that meeting were in favour.

**b) Review of actions**

- **Add the condition of trees on the Lammas and Watton Green to the Google calendar: completed.**
- **Report on the work carried out by George Bateman**  
Mrs. Dinnin said she acted as an assessor for the Duke of Edinburgh Award project which George Bateman undertook in cleaning and painting the six benches for the Parish Council. She also wrote the required report.  
It was agreed to send a letter of thanks to George Bateman. **Action: C. Dinnin/J. Allsop**
- **Place on circulation Mr. Stock's letters re trees in the village**  
Mr. Stock said that he had had a response to both letters.  
Oliver Head MP replied on 14<sup>th</sup> September and said that he has immediately taken up the issue with County Councillor Brian Hammond and will be in touch again as soon as he receives a response.  
Raj Goutam e-mailed Mr. Stock on 18<sup>th</sup> September to apologise for the delay and to say that he was investigating the matter further and would be in touch again in due course. He also said that he had informed his colleague re our concerns about the nearby staked-tree.
- **Place on circulation planning decision for Blue Hill Farm: completed.**
- **Pass website entry for Watton School to Mr. Stock: outstanding.** **Action: C Clark**
- **E-mail all Parish Councillors the alternative link to the Google Calendar site: completed.**
- **Give the new set of Community Hall keys to Watton School: completed.**
- **Ask Drs. Haslam and Shah to check the contents of the draft website entry for Healthcare: completed.**  
The Healthcare entry has been uploaded to the Watton-at-Stone website.
- **Chase East Herts Council for a response re dog-bin for Church Walk**  
Mr. Meischke said that Mr. Poulton informed him that East Herts Council do not have any funds to install a dog-waste bin at the Church end of Church Walk or to replace the missing bin on Walkern Road. Since the dog-waste bin went missing on Walkern Road, owners have been depositing their dog-waste in a pile where the bin had been located.

The cost of a new dog-waste bin is £69 plus £125 annual emptying costs (plus VAT). Mr. Smith said that he objected to the Parish Council paying for the emptying of an additional dog-waste bin.

Mrs. McCash proposed that East Herts Council be asked to install a replacement dog-waste on Walkern Road. Mr. Filer seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to contact East Herts Council accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Get a carpenter to fit a new bolt to the external toilet door**  
Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall Trustees - Minutes on meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2009.
- **E-mail Mr. Howell re use of Main Hall: completed.**
- **Place decision notice for Blue Hill Farm, Walkern Road (3/09/0874/FP) on circulation: completed.**
- **Write to Simon Drinkwater (East Herts District Council) re funds for the Benington Wind Farm**  
Refer to item 7 c, Specific items - Financial support for Stop Benington Wind Farm Committee.
- **Write to Stop Benington Wind Farm Committee re funds for the Benington Wind Farm**  
Refer to item 7 c, Specific items - Financial support for Stop Benington Wind Farm Committee.
- **E-mail Hertfordshire Highways re salt bins in the village**  
Raj Goutam (Hertfordshire Highways) has confirmed in an email to Mr. Poulton (dated 14<sup>th</sup> September) that the salt bins filling programme in the county is scheduled to start in October.  
Earlier today, the Clerk saw Hertfordshire Highways filling the salt bin in Station Road.
- **Send out self-employment status letters: completed.**  
Mr. Meischke said that he had not received any signed copies of the self-employment status letters back.  
Mr. Meischke to chase. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Upload Risk Assessment Register onto the website: completed.**
- **Put a copy of the Risk Assessment Register in the Parish Council folder: completed.**
- **Display 2008/09 audit conclusion notice on the Parish Council notice board: completed.**
- **Give budget items for 2010/11 for Mr. Filer**  
Mr. Filer reminded all Parish Councillors to inform him of any items they would like included in the 2009/10 budget as soon as possible via e-mail. **Action: Parish Councillors**
- **Obtain quotations for grass cutting and hedge cutting quotes for 2010/11**  
The Clerk said she had obtained a quotation from Frank Cooper & Son Limited for the sportsfield grass cut. However, she had not contacted Nick Whitehead yet to ask him if he wanted to cut the sportsfield hedges. **Action: J. Allsop**  
Mr. Smith confirmed that Bluebury Contractors quotation for grass cutting works in 2010/11 would show an increase of 5% on last years price of £997.50 (plus VAT) which was to:
  1. Cut and remove grass once only (spring cut)
  2. Flail cut grass once only (autumn cut)
  3. Allow for hand strim under trees on both areas (to prevent encroachment).
- **Invoice Beane Valley for the fitting and installation of the lock and bolt: completed.**
- **Put Cricket Club use of small changing room on the Google Calendar for April 2010: completed.**
- **Investigate the cost of numbered stakes for the Allotments: outstanding** **Action: C. Dinnin**
- **Ask Adam Welch to remove the single bush on the pump slope**  
Mr. Welch has been asked to remove the bush but has not done the work yet.
- **Speak to Major Shepherd (Watton Nursery) re additional planting in the War Memorial garden**  
Mr. Stock has been unable to make contact with Major Shepherd. However, he feels that a good solution may be to plant prostrate conifers along the back boarder of the site. For budgetary purposes, he estimates that this will cost in the region of £100.
- **On receipt of an invoice, ask St. Albans Diocesan Board to refund the Parish Council for repairing the kissing gate**  
Mr. Smith confirmed that the work had been done. The Clerk to write to the St. Albans Diocesan Board on receipt of an invoice from Blue Bury Contractors. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Accept Adam Welch's quotation for clearing the encroaching grass on Church Walk**  
Mrs. Dinnin said that Adam Welch will be doing this work during the winter months.
- **Draw up draft maintenance schedule for the sportsfield**  
Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Sportsfield maintenance.

- **Investigate loose wires on MPPA fence and arrange for the repair work to be done**  
Mr. Meischke said that the work to the MPPA fencing will be done shortly. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Carry-out 6-monthly check: completed.**  
Refer to item 8 b iv, Routine Reports - 6-monthly check of MPPA, Play Area on sportsfield and Community Hall equipment.
- **Attend Beane Valley Children's Centre's Open Day on 14<sup>th</sup> September: completed.**
- **When installed, insure bench seat to be sited near Watkins Hall Farm: completed.**
- **Inform the Clerk when Mr. Beadle has installed the bench near Watkins Hall Farm: completed.**
- **Draft a reply to Bob Thurlow for Mrs. Dinnin, Mrs. McCash and Mr. Poulton to approve: completed.**

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

- **Obtain the name of the PCSO who will be taking over from PCSO Paul Weston**  
Mrs. McCash said that the appointment of a PCSO to take over from PCSO Paul Weston has yet to be made.
- **Complete Whempstead section for the new website: outstanding** **Action: C. Clark**
- **Complete Neighbourhood Watch section for the new website**  
Mrs. McCash said that the police have recently come back to her with their proposed changes to the draft Neighbourhood Watch website entry. However, she has not had a chance to review the changes. **Action: H. McCash**

## 6 Planning

### a) Applications

**i) 2 Whempstead Cottages, Whempstead Road (3/09/1484/FP/JS)**

Single storey rear elevation

Unfortunately, the above plans could not be discussed because Mr. Clark was not present at the meeting to discuss them and had been unable to pass the plans to another Parish Councillor.

The Clerk to contact Mr. Clark.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**ii) Heath Mount School, Woodhall Park (3/09/0007/AD/JS)**

Alterations to existing door to service corridor on east wing of Woodhall Park. Existing door leaf to be replaced with new door leaf. Existing door frame, fanlight and fixed sash in casement to be retained

After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed to write to East Herts Council informing them that they have no comment on the application.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**iii) Watton Methodist Church (3/09/1537/FP/JS)**

New side entrance with ramp, single storey side and rear extension and vestry extension

Parish Councillors looked at the plans and agreed to write to East Herts Council informing them that they have no comment on the application.

**Action: J. Allsop**

### b) Decision

None.

## 7 Specific items

### a) Website and website maintenance

Mr. Stock said that he felt that his work on the website is now complete and that the time had come for a Website Working-Group meeting to discuss the future management, update and development of the site.

Date of the meeting to be arranged.

**Action: D. Stock**

### b) Website diary

No items were identified to be added onto the website diary.

### c) Financial support for Stop Benington Wind Farm Committee

Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors were e-mailed copies of the following.

- Letter from Stop the Benington Wind Farm Committee
- Letter from Simon Drinkwater, East Herts Council re Benington Wind Farm

Parish Councillors discussed the contents of both letters. Mr. Meischke said that Mr. Harris remains very concerned that we have not received the unequivocal legal advice we had hoped to get. The reason for the advice was so that if there was a challenge we could recover any loss from the adviser.

Mr. Meischke read out the following e-mail from Alan Harrison (LL.B Solicitor, National Legal Advisor SLCC, The Professional Body for Local Council Managers Professional Supportive Innovative) to Lionel Thacker (Society of Local Council Clerks) dated 16<sup>th</sup> September

'The setting up of 'fighting funds' by parish councils, or their contribution to the funds of others, is becoming increasingly common. The key in each case is to be clear as to how the money will be spent. What is the purpose of the expenditure and what function is the council discharging?

Will the fund, for example, enable more effective representation against a particular planning application? If so, it might be that the function is the conduct of consultation in town and country planning and s.111 LGA 1972 permits spending to enable or facilitate that function.

If the purpose of the fighting fund is to enable lawyers to be instructed, it may be that the authorising provision is s.222 LGA 1972, provided that this is expedient for the protection of the interests of the local community.

If none of these situations apply, it may be that the only power left is the free resource in s.137.

If the proposed windfarm is likely to impact on the environment of both council areas, it may be that the authorising power is the same for both, in which case the Council being asked to contribute might reasonably ask the other on which power they have relied.'

Although they are very much against the proposed wind-farm, Mr. Filer, Mr. Stock and Mrs. McCash said that if the Parish Council was to vote tonight on donating to the Stop Benington Wind Farm Committee, they would have to abstain because of the unresolved issues outstanding with regard to legal aspects of the action.

After discussion, it was agreed to defer the decision of donating funds to the Stop Benington Wind Farm Committee until the November meeting.

The following was agreed.

- Obtain from the internet, information on appeals and who were awarded costs.
- Write to Stop Benington Wind Farm Committee to find out if they have been given any advice on the risk of funders.
- Check the Parish Council insurance policy to find out if we are covered for risk to funders.

**Action: J. Meischke/J. Allsop**

#### **d) Traffic survey**

Mr. Poulton forwarded all Parish Councillors an e-mail dated 1<sup>st</sup> October from Danny Kyan (Hertfordshire Highways) attaching a recent traffic survey and the proposed traffic safety measures being considered for the Southern end of the High Street.

The survey identified that vehicle speeds are less than 15% above the village 30mph speed limit together with an improving accident history trend and therefore Hertfordshire Highways could not justify other traffic calming measures e.g. road humps or chicanes. Instead, consideration is being given to road marking and signing improvement measures with further monitoring carried out to determine whether improved driver behaviour can be obtained through the following proposed driver awareness measures:

- Provision of an enhanced village boundary sign incorporating a road safety message on Ware Road, to improve driver awareness of the start of the village environment.
- Maintenance of the existing 30mph signing on Ware Road, including replacing worn signs, straightening sign posts and vegetation trimming to enhance forward visibility. Provision of a new '30' roundel road marking to accompany the upright 30mph speed limit signs, to reinforce the start of the speed limit.
- Installation of a junction ahead warning sign in advance of the northbound approach to the junction of the High Street and Rivershill, with an accompanying 'Reduce Speed Now' sign sub-plate to further remind drivers of the changing High Street environment and junction approach.
- Provision of 'SLOW' road markings to the northbound village entry to accompany the new warning sign to aid further driver awareness.

## **8 Reports**

### **a) Sub-Committees**

#### **Budget & Finance**

Mr. Filer reported on the following items.

- **Monthly accounts**  
All Parish Councillors present were given a copy of the monthly accounts.  
Mrs. McCash proposed that the Parish Council approves the payments. Mrs. Dinnin seconded the motion and all present were in favour.
- **Six-monthly statement of accounts**  
Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors were given a copy of the 6-monthly statement of accounts for the period ending the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009.  
Mr. Filer went through the expenditure and income items for both the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts. He explained the variations in the statements.

### Parish Council expenditure

- No expenditure is shown against the following items.  
Sportsfield hedges - the work has not yet been done.  
Memorial / Pump/High Street flowerbeds - Adam Welch has not submitted any invoices for work done in this financial year. Mrs. Dinnin to chase. **Action: C. Dinnin**
- Lighting energy is over budget; however, the cost should reduce in autumn this year. Currently, Hertfordshire County Council is tied into a one-year contact for electricity, which was set when electricity charges were at their highest.  
Lighting energy charges to be added to the Google calendar. **Action: J. Allsop**

### Community Hall expenditure

- The cost of electricity and gas for the Community Hall are both over budget for this time of year. Mr. Filer registered his concern that this expenditure would go over the annual budget figure.
- Wages are over budget because of the agreed increase in cleaning at the Community Hall due to the increase in hiring.
- Cleaning materials is over budget due to the industrial cleaning done by Hardgen Elite early in the financial year.
- Mr. Filer expressed concern that income from floodlighting the MPPA was only 13.9% of the budget and although this represented the summer period, the low income was still a concern.
- **Six-monthly inspection of accounts**  
This will be done by Mrs. McCash next month.

### Community Hall Trustees

In the absence of Mr. Poulton, Mr. Stock reported on the following items.

- **Minutes on meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2009**  
Mr. Stock proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record. Mr. Knight seconded the motion and Mr. Meischke was in favour. Mr. Meischke signed the minutes.
  - **External toilet door**  
The Trustees decided not to replace the bolts in the external toilets that have been broken for over 2 years.  
Mr. Meischke reported that there has been a fire in one of the external toilets. This happened when they were left unlocked after the secondary school children had returned to the village. If any more fires occur, the Parish Council may have to consider locking the toilets permanently, but for the time being they will remain open on weekdays during school hours.
- **East Herts Village Hall Challenge 2010**  
East Herts Council have e-mailed to announce the fourth annual Village Hall Challenge.  
The Village Hall Challenge has been set up to recognise those village halls that are delivering a high quality local service and are serving as the social hub of the village

Three grants will be awarded: 1<sup>st</sup> prize is £10,000 (to be recognised as the Best Run Village Hall in East Herts for 2010) which will be awarded for building improvements; 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> prizes are £500 each.

Mr. Meischke and Mr. Poulton to look at the possibilities of entering the challenge.

**Action: J. Meischke/N. Poulton**

### Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **MPPA - floodlighting maintenance contract**  
Replacement floodlighting units were installed by Floodlighting Limited in March this year. The installation is currently covered by a one-year workmanship guarantee, the control gear in the columns is covered for 3 years and the lamps are guaranteed for 500 hours.  
Mr. Knight has contacted Floodlighting Limited who have supplied a quotation of £612 for a one-year cleaning and servicing contract. Mr. Knight's recommendation is that we do not go ahead with a service contract at the moment because we are still covered by the guarantees.  
The cost of a site visit from Floodlighting Limited is £292 plus an additional £120 for floodlighting bulb.  
Mr. Knight suggested that a budget provision of £420 be put in the 2010/2011 budget. The Parish Council to consider replacing all the floodlighting bulbs at the same time when several of them have failed, which hopefully should not be for several years.  
Mr. Knight said that the Parish Council had possibly practiced false economy in the past by purchasing low cost floodlighting bulbs which had a short life.

- **Sportsfield maintenance**

Mr. Knight was asked to draw up a sportsfield maintenance schedule for improving the playing surface. He said that the sportsfield is currently in a poor condition and the Parish Council should be responsible for maintaining it in a responsible state. Mr. Knight has obtained the following approximate costs for improving the site from Frank Cooper and Son Limited.

- Verti-drainage treatment - £400

Verti draining is a method of improving drainage to the surface by introducing a series of spikes which penetrate the surface by 250 -300mm.

- Apply selective herbicide, grass seed and fertilise - £1230

It was agreed to put a budget provision of £1,500 in the 2010/11 budget

**Budget 2010/11**

Mr. Smith suggested that the Parish Council should budget for a spend of about £1500 every 3 years involving fertilising and Verti-drainage and for the other years fertilising and re-seeding as required.

## Environment

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Allotments**

Mrs. Dinnin, Mrs. McCash and Mr. Smith attended an Allotment and Garden Association meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> October.

Mrs. Dinnin said that discussions took place about the gate onto Church Walk which is being left open. The general consensus was that if the Parish Council remove the present combination padlock and purchase a new padlock with key-holder use only, this should resolve the current problem. The Allotment and Garden Association agreed that the gap under the gate would not allow a small dog to pass under but they thought a small rabbit would still be able to get through.

After discussion, the Parish Council agreed to purchase a new padlock with 4 keys. The Parish Council will retain one key and the remaining key-holders will be Mrs. McCash, Mrs Phillips and Mrs. Hall (these are the people who use the gate to take flowers from the allotments up to the Church). **Action: H. McCash**

Mr. Meischke to explain the new key-holder system to Mr. Phillips.

**Action: J. Meischke**

Mrs. Dinnin to inform Bob Thurlow accordingly.

**Action: C. Dinnin**

For financial reasons the hedge cutting on the allotments to be deferred until the new financial year.

Mrs. Dinnin said that no hedge cutting works can be done between 17<sup>th</sup> February – 24<sup>th</sup> July because of the nesting season.

Mr. Smith to submit an estimate for the hedge cutting works as soon as possible so that it can be included in the Parish Council 2010/11 budget.

**Action: M. Smith**  
**Budget 2010/11**

- **Trees on the Lammas**

Adam Welch will be cutting back the three overhanging trees from the river on the Lammas. His quotation of £720 was accepted in October 2008.

- **East of England plan**

The current plan is being extended from the current period of 2011 to 2021 to cover a further 10 years to 2031. Points arising from the consultation document were raised by Ian Knight and discussed. He offered to generate a draft response that would be circulated to council members for further comment.

The salient points that would be included in the response were:

- No invitation had been received from the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) to attend public consultation meetings or to comment on the revised plan

No review of the plans for transport infrastructure or water policies were being proposed. These plans are flawed and do not address even the current problems.

**Action: I. Knight**

- **Cost of numbered stakes for some or all of the Allotments plots**

Mrs. Dinnin agreed to investigate the cost of number stakes for the allotments.

**Action: C. Dinnin**

- **Trees at Great Innings play area**

Mr. Stock spoke to Trevor Waldoock at East Herts Council yesterday and was told that the site was to be surveyed this week with a view to planting the new trees during mid November/early December.

Mr. Waldoock agreed to report back when the work had been completed.

This item to be placed on the agenda for January 2010.

**Agenda: 01/10**

- **Footpath/hedges – Lammas**

Three branches overhanging the footpath that runs adjacent to the riverbank between the Lammas and Walkern Road are causing a problem to walkers.

It was agreed to write to Mr. Abel Smith asking him to arrange for the branches to be cut back.

**Action: C. Dinnin/J. Allsop**

- **Maple tree**  
Adam Welch has planted the Maple tree donated by Janet Goodacre on Watton Green.  
It was agreed to write a letter of thanks to Janet Goodacre.

**Action: C. Dinnin**

**b) Routine reports**

**i) Fire-alarm test**

The fire-alarm was tested on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> October by Mr. Meischke.

**ii) Monthly village-report**

Mr. Stock completed the report on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

Only the adverse items highlighted in the monthly village-report are minuted.

- Great Innings play area

Some of the rubber mats are disconnected at the top of the slide in the Great Innings Play area. This could be a potential trip hazard. Inform East Herts Council accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

Although there is not a problem with litter in the play area, there is a problem at the far end of the football goals and the slope/wooded area beyond as it goes towards Moorymead Close. Inform East Herts Council accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- Dog-waste – Walkern Road

The dog-waste bin in Walkern Road is missing and people are depositing their dog-waste in a pile where the bin had been located. Mr. Stock repeated his concern about this and said that it is a serious issue which needs to be resolved without delay.

**iii) Weekly sportsfield-report and action**

None.

**iv) 6-monthly check of MPPA, Play Area on sportsfield and Community Hall equipment**

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Stock completed the 6-monthly check on 14<sup>th</sup> September.

Mr. Stock reported on the adverse items highlighted in the 6-monthly check are minuted.

- MPPA kicker boards need tightening.

**Action: J. Meischke**

- Wire fence in gate needs repairing or replacing.

Mr. Meischke said he already had an action point to do this job.

**Action: J. Meischke**

- Floodlight nearest to the Rectory looks as though it has blown as the glass cover is opaque.

Mr. Knight to inspect.

**Action: I. Knight**

- The wire is breaking on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> panel on right-hand.

Mr. Meischke to inspect.

**Action: J. Meischke**

- Gravel board broken on sportsfield side needs replacing.

Mr. Meischke to inspect.

**Action: J. Meischke**

- The armrest on the Walkern Road bench needs repairing.

Mr. Meischke to inspect.

**Action: J. Meischke**

- Sportsfield bench donated by Debra Freeman needs repairing

Mr. Stock said that Mr. and Mrs. Freeman have repaired the seat.

**9 Correspondence received**

**a) Letter from David and Julie Graham**

Mr. Meischke read out a letter dated 19<sup>th</sup> September from David and Julie Graham. A copy of this letter to be e-mailed to all Parish Councillors.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**b) E-mail from BBC Countryfile Magazine web site - "Five Days to the Weekend"**

Mr. Meischke read out an e-mail dated 30<sup>th</sup> September from Nick Peer who writes a weekly column for the BBC Countryfile Magazine web site called "Five Days to the Weekend". Each week they feature a different village or small town to visit on the following weekend.

Nick Peer was given permission to use a photograph from the Watton-at-Stone website, which has been included in a feature of Watton-at-Stone published on 5<sup>th</sup> October.

The Clerk to e-mail all Parish Councillors the internet link to the feature.

<http://www.bbccountryfilemagazine.com/features/discover/19>

**Action: J. Allsop**

**c) Letter from Mrs Alison Kent re her daughter's trip to Norway**

Mrs. Alison Kent wrote to Mr. Poulton on 23<sup>rd</sup> September requesting a grant from the Parish Council towards her daughter Emma's trip to Southern Norway.

The Clerk e-mailed Lionel Thatcher (Society of Local Council Clerks) on 8<sup>th</sup> October and received the following reply.

'No, there is no provision for making that type of grant. You could only use Section 137 but this requires that the grant should be for the benefit of most residents, which this clearly isn't.

Your only hope would be to adopt the Power of Wellbeing and then you can spend money on pretty much anything you like!

Parish Councillors agreed that it was not appropriate to give Emma Kent a grant towards her trip.

Mr. Poulton has already written to Mrs. Kent informing her that her letter was on the agenda for discussion at the October meeting, but he thought it unlikely that the Parish Council would contribute public money towards the trip. He suggested that she write to Mrs. Newman, President of the Ware Rotary Club, who may be able to assist with a grant.

#### d) Letter from Mrs. M. Spinks

Mr. Meischke read out a letter from Mrs. Spinks concerning speeding in Walkern Road, High Street footpaths and the salt bin in Beane Road.

It was agreed to write to Mrs. Spinks as follows.

- **Speeding traffic on the Walkern Road**  
A recent traffic survey carried-out by Hertfordshire Highways did not identify the need for any traffic calming measures on the Walkern Road.
- **Hedges overhanging the footpath in the High Street**  
The Parish Council will be contacting Hertfordshire Highways to ask them to arrange for the appropriate owners to cut back the hedges that are overhanging the footpath.
- **Salt bins**  
Hertfordshire Highways started filling the salt bins in the village on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October. We will be inspecting all the bins in the village to ensure that they have all been filled before the bad winter weather starts. **Action: J. Meischke/J. Allsop**

#### e) Letter from Stop the Benington Wind Farm Committee

Refer to item 7 c, Specific items - Financial support for Stop Benington Wind Farm Committee.

#### f) Letter from Simon Drinkwater, East Herts Council re Benington Wind Farm

Refer to item 7 c, Specific items - Financial support for Stop Benington Wind Farm Committee.

#### g) The Planning Inspectorate re footpaths (Watton-at-Stone 39 and Aston 33)

The Parish Council has previously been notified about the changes to be applied to footpaths 39 and 33.

#### h) British Telecom payphones

The Clerk to e-mail British Telecom's letter dated 3<sup>rd</sup> October to all Parish Councillors. **Action: J. Allsop**  
This item to be placed on the agenda for the November Parish Council meeting. **Agenda: 11/09**

## 10 Village organisations

- **Watton Youth Drop Inn:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone School Governors:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Watch:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association**  
Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Allotments.
- **Watton-at-Stone Memorial Hall Management Committee**  
Mr. Filer said that all of the ceiling strip-lights in the Memorial Hall have now been replaced because they did not meet current regulations.
- **Watton-at-Stone Pre-School Playgroup**  
Mrs. Dinnin said that at the Pre-School Playgroup's AGM, which she attended last week, Jessica Tatlow was re-elected as chairperson.  
The finances of the Pre-School playgroup have gone from a loss two years ago to being in credit by over £10,000. This is mainly due to grant funding, additional numbers of children attending the playgroup and salaries being pegged. They have used some of this money to give staff a 6% pay increase and to put extra funds into their contingency fund.
- **Watton-at-Stone Scout & Guide Group:** Nothing to report.

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

The Watton-at-Stone Football Club would like to fit some permanent new goal posts on the sportsfield instead of purchasing movable posts. The nets would be removed after each use.

The safe storage of new movable aluminium goal posts is a concern because even when secured by padlock they would probably still go missing.

After discussion, Mr. Filer proposed that the football club be given permission to fit permanent goal posts on the sportsfield. Mr. Stock seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Mr. Knight to inform the Football Club accordingly.

**Action: I. Knight**

The Watton-at-Stone Football club have requested a link on the Watton-at-Stone on the website. This was agreed.

Mr. Knight to inform the Football Club accordingly.

**Action: I. Knight**

The Football Association regulations now state that spectators must be kept 1 metre away from the touchline and therefore the pitch will have a rope around it during matches. This will not encroach onto the play area.

- **Police Authority:** Nothing to report.
- **River Beane Restoration Association:** Nothing to report.

## 11 Items for Parish News

Apart from correcting the address for the Parish Council's website, no items were identified for inclusion in the November 2009 issue of the Parish News.

The Clerk left the meeting while the following items were discussed.

## 12 Exclusion of Press and Public - Clerk's salary

The meeting was closed to the public.

- **The meeting closed at 2120 hours.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2009.**