

PARISH REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2000/2001

The Parish Council met eleven times last year on the third Wednesday of every month. For the next civic year the parish councillors have agreed to meet on the last Wednesday of every month.

The Parish Council operates three Sub-Committees. The Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee, chaired by John Meischke, the Budget & Finances Sub-Committee, chaired by Helen McCash and the Environment Sub-committee chaired by David Stock.

These Sub-Committees meet as and when necessary and discuss issues and make recommendations to the full Council.

The Parish Council has tried to assist the Youth Club in re-opening by supporting their request for a part-time Youth Worker. Unfortunately to date no one has been found to fill this post and the Youth Club remains closed.

A presentation was made by the Sports and Social Club to find additional playing field facilities on land to the south of Mill Lane. Mr Abel Smith has agreed a long lease. No further progress at this stage.

Wimpey Homes sponsored two dog waste bins for the village – one in Mill Lane and one by the new play area in Great Innings.

Governors of Watton-at-Stone JMI have requested the removal of the recycling unit from their site. Various alternative sites have been investigated. The District Council is proceeding with a site at Watton Nursery with thanks to Mr Abel Smith and Mr Shepherd.

A major task was undertaken this year to re-surface the Multi-Purpose Play Area. The work is being done by Doe Sports thanks to grants from the Parish Council, the Lottery Board and East Herts District Council.

The Cricket Club have had made a portable site screen for the cricket season. They have also applied for planning permission to erect a tractor shed on the sports field.

The exterior of the community Hall has been painted together with internal decorations to the common parts, pavilion and external toilets.

Vandalism has again been a problem. Matters have been reported to the police and all repairs carried out to bring the building up to standard.

Safety checks have been carried out on the fire extinguishers, electricity and gas supplies.

Three Valleys have replaced water pipes throughout the village and thanks goes to Dennis Filer in getting the work re-instated following the collapse of some of the trench work.

Mr Richard Singleton resigned because of work commitments and Mrs Sarah Davies has filled the vacancy.

Thanks go to David Stock for working with WAGN and East Herts Highways Partnership in getting a footpath reinstated over the railway bridge.

As in previous years, the Parish Council has maintained the War Memorial and, with the financial help of the District Council, has arranged collection of fallen leaves in the High Street and picking of litter around the village on a regular basis.

Problems arose this year with our litter picker and it was decided to part company, East Herts District Council have asked Onyx to undertake the work at no extra cost.

This being the millennium, the Parish Council has produced a Parish Map. Thanks go to John Meischke and his son Jono. This is on sale to the public at £1.50.

The May Fayre Truck Pull was an enormous success thanks to the organisation of Mr & Mrs Bewley and Mr & Mrs Beavan. The proceeds will be used to purchase an ornate village sign that will be erected at the southern end of the village.

Watton-at-Stone Methodist Church held an Art & Craft Fayre and St Andrew & St Mary Parish Church held a Flower Festival. All were well attended and successful. The Parish Council's thanks go to all who helped organise these events. The Time Capsule, which was buried in the Church, contained documents about the village.

The southern end of the village has been planted with daffodil bulbs. Thanks go to a donation from Watton Nursery. Children from Watton School carried out the planting. Wooden bollards have been placed at this point to stop cars and lorries mounting the grass verges.

Thanks go to Vernon Dunhill for overseeing the Lammas Land and the Parish Paths Partnership. There is now in place a proper footpath running from Walkern Road, back of Lammas and Rivershill coming out by Watton Nursery.

The Parish Council has received its Annual ROSPA report on the Play Equipment and taken the appropriate action.

The Hatfield Train crash caused enormous problems for commuters and various letters were sent to our MP Oliver Heald, WAGN and Rail Track.

The village directory was reprinted and circularised to all parishioners.

Due to County Council cut backs the Parish Council undertook to replace salt in the salt bins following the winter snow and ice.

The Parish Council is to undertake housing needs survey.

Foot and Mouth Disease hit the country and all public rights of way and footpaths have been closed. No reported cases in the village although there was one suspected case, which was given the all clear.

The Parish Council received visits from the Police - Inspector Larter and PC Ivens also Sian Freer from the Countryside Management Service.

Donations were made to the Meditation and Remembrance garden at the Methodist Church, Royal British Legion, East Herts Community Playbus and the Parish Council subsidised by 50% the cost of bus permits for the elderly and disabled.

A special donation was made towards Rev Brian Gwinn's retirement and a donation was made to a charity in memory of the late David Gifford.

Parish Councillors have attended the East Herts Police Community Partnership, the Inter Parish Conference held at Datchworth, East Herts District Council's Planning Department, and the 2001/2002 Policing Plan.

The Parish Council has representation on local organisations so that we may assist in any ideas, projects or plans they might have. The list is as follows:

- Watton-at-Stone Conservation Society
- Watton-at-Stone Memorial Hall Management Committee
- Watton-at-Stone School Governors
- Watton-at-Stone Scout & Guide Group
- Watton-at-Stone Sports & Social Club
- River Beane Restoration Association
- E.H. Community Playbus
- Police Authority

It is the policy of the Parish Council to view all local plans and make appropriate planning comments to the local authority.

Can I thank all Councillors who have assisted me through the year.

Finally, none of our work would have been possible without the assistance of our Clerk, Mrs Jane Allsop, who has put in many hours beyond her normal duties and on behalf of all Parish Councillors I would like to say a big thank you to Jane for all her hard work.