

A meeting of the Wotton-at-Stone Parish Council was held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 19th April 2000 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Mr. D. Stock (Vice-Chairman)
 Mrs. C. Dinnin
 Mr. D. Filer
 Mrs. H. McCash

Mr. V. Dunhill
 Mr. I. Knight
 Mr. J. Meischke

Sports & Social Club: John Booker (Chairman) Maurice Gordon (Youth Football)

In the absence of Mr. Poulton, Mr. Stock took the chair.

Mr. Stock asked Parish Councillors to delete the following items from the agenda

- **5 a iii Practice Wall at the MPPA**
 This item has been withdrawn at the request of the Sports & Social Club.
- **7 (h) NHS Direct Forum - 26th April 2000**
 This item was put on the agenda in error.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. N. Poulton, Mr. C. Clark and Mr. R. Singleton.

2 Presentation by Sports & Social Club re the playing fields

Mr. Stock said that he had invited the Sports & Social Club representatives to this meeting in response to their request for an opportunity to up-date the Parish Council on plans for additional sporting facilities and current progress. He then welcomed the Sports & Social Club representatives and said that, because of the length of tonight's agenda, he would appreciate it if they could restrict their presentation to 30 minutes.

Mr. Knight (as Vice-Chairman of the Sports & Social Club) then spoke on behalf of the Sports & Social Club.

He went through the history of this project. The Parish Council were initially involved in identify suitable land within the Parish for additional sportsfield facilities.

As a result of meetings on the subject, Mr. Abel Smith has granted the Sports & Social Club an unconditional lease for the land adjacent to Mill Lane which was formally known as the old rifle range . This land is very suitable for the purpose because it is close to all the main amenities (i.e. electricity, water and gas).

The Sports & Social Club have drawn up plans for the site. They include a full-size football pitch, two junior pitches and one small pitch for beginners, two tennis courts/multi-purpose facilities and the option of a trim-track. There would also be changing-room facilities and an indoor training area. The estimated cost of the whole project is between £350,000 and £370,000.

The Sports & Social Club is seeking explicit support from the Parish Council.

The next step will then be for the Sports & Social Club to have a public meeting to obtain the views and support of the whole parish.

Funding will be sort from grants as well as local fund-raising activities.

Mr. Knight said that there continues to be a considerable growth in the amount of people playing football and tennis within the village. In particular, the adult Football Club now has three teams and the Junior Football Club has approximately 130 boys and girls playing. The youth teams currently go up to 13 years of age.

The Cricket Club are not interested in increasing their current facilities.

Mr. Stock said that this item will be on the May agenda, under Specific Items, for further discussion.

Mr. Booker and Mr. Gordon left the meeting at 7.40 p.m.

3 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 15th March 2000**
 Mr. Filer proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Vice-Chairman as a true record. Mr. Meischke seconded the motion and all present at that meeting were in favour.

b) Review of actions

- **Chase Railtrack re fly-tipping at Broom Hall Farm**

Mr. Stock said that we have still not received a response from Railtrack re our two letters concerning fly-tipping at Broom Hall Farm

It was agreed to ask Mr. Poulton to inspect the area to see if it has been cleared. **Action: N. Poulton**

If the site has not been cleared, a strong letter to be sent to Railtrack accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Investigate changing the position of the barrier at Church Walk to allow wheelchair access**

Mr. Dunhill reported that he and Mr. Poulton had inspected the barrier. The barrier has been moved and some final adjustments are to be made. Mrs. McCash said that she had seen the barrier open, but not within the last week. It was agreed that that this action should now be considered complete.

- **Negotiate with Wimpy Homes re the purchase of additional dog-waste bins for the village**

This action point is on-going.

- **Inspect barbed-wire fence in horses field to see if it has been repaired**

Mr. Meischke confirmed that the barbed-wire fence had been repaired.

- **Organise a work party to repair the wooden fence on the sportsfield**

This action point has been completed.

Mr. Filer, Mr. Poulton, Mr. Stock and Mr. Dunhill completed the urgent repairs required on the 8th April.

- **Send donation of £50 (from the Millennium fund) to Watton-at-Stone Millennium Mayfayre & Truck Pull**

This action point has been completed.

- **Submit report & annual return for the year 1999/00 to PPP**

Mr. Dunhill said that he was in the process of submitting the report and annual return. **Action: V. Dunhill**

- **Submit an application for grant-aid for the year 2000/01 to PPP**

Mr. Dunhill said that he is planning to submit an application for approximately £4,000 for major footpath re-vetment work. He is having discussions with the Countryside Management Service and the Rights of Way Department at HCC, and expects that this action point will be completed within the next two weeks.

Action: Action: V. Dunhill

- **Return completed forms for the Village of the Year competition for 2000**

This action point has been completed.

- **Place a copy of Parish Council's response to the Green County Hertfordshire Strategy on circulation**

This action point has been completed.

- **Arranged a site meeting with Dave Standen (EH Highways Partnership) re Walkern Road bridge**

Mr. Knight said that he had not managed to find the time to arrange a site meeting.

Mr. Stock said that Mr. Ron Jack had now taken over Mr. Standen's duties as our new Parish Engineer and all further contact should be made through him.

- **Write to Oliver Heald re Police response to rural crime**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to HCC re Hertfordshire's local transport plan**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write and thank Countryside Management Service for re-vetment work carried-out on footpath 36**

Mr. Dunhill said that he had verbally thanked the Countryside Management Service but not written to them. It was agreed that a letter of thanks be sent without further delay. **Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop**

- **Advertise & issue bus permits on 27th March 2000**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to Oliver Heald MP re Government threat to abolish Town and Parish Councils**

This action point has been completed.

- **Check the details on the Cornhill insurance schedule for the Community Hall**

This action point has been completed.

- **Obtain quotation from Hertford Glass for repair to the framework of the fire door in the Pavilion**

This action point has been completed.

- **Contact Doe Sport re starting the MPPA resurfacing work during the week commencing 7/9/00**

This action point has been completed.

- **Arrange for brick work around the pump to be built-up by one course**

Mr. Stock reported that Mr. Poulton had contacted Jeff Skidmore re the additional brick work. Because this work would have cost around £600 to complete and there was not sufficient funds available from the LEAF grant, grass seed and weed killer was purchased for this area. The invoices for the grass seed and weed killer were submitted to EHDC before the 31st March for repayment.

- **Submit all invoices relating to the LEAF grant before the 31st March 2000**

This action point has been completed.

- **Chase EH Highways Partnership re plans for traffic-calming in Station Road**

Mr. Stock said that he had asked Mrs. McCash not to carry-out this action point. (Refer to the next item.)

- **Contact EH Highways Partnership to get a firm commitment for traffic-calming in Station Road**

Mr. Stock has spoken to Mr. Standen who promised to have draft plans available before this meeting.

- **Write to EHDC re planning application 25 High Street**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to Hertfordshire Association for Local History re Recorder Scheme - Special Project**

This action point has been completed.

- **Pass the EHDC leisure guide information sheets to the Sports & Social Club for their completion**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to Mr. Ward re condition of Whempstead roads**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to PC Ivens re number of telephone calls received reporting incidents occurring within the parish**

This action point has been completed.

- **Return one signed copy of hire agreement to the Sports & Social Club**

This action point has been completed.

- **Turn down heating thermostats in Community Hall**

This action point has been completed.

- **Ask Christine Bewley to inform the Parish Council immediately when she finds the external doors to the Community Hall unlocked**

This action point has been completed. Mr. Meischke said that to date, no external doors had been left open.

4 Specific items

a) Parish Map

To save time, Mr. Meischke suggested that Parish Councillors look at the updated Parish Map at the end of the meeting. This was agreed.

b) Dog-fouling: dog-waste bin for Mill Lane

This item is on-going and will remain on the agenda.

c) Three Valley Water trenches

Because no progress has been made, Mr. Filer agreed to speak again with the Chairman of Three Valleys Water.

Action: D. Filer

d) Walkern Road bridge

As reported under 3 b, Review of actions, Mr. Knight said that he had not managed to find the time to arrange a site meeting.

It was agreed that Mr. Knight and Mrs. Dinnin pursue this matter together before we get too far into this financial year.

Action: I. Knight/C. Dinnin

Mr. Stock said that he would assist them as and when required.

e) Reinstatement of bollards in School Lane

Mr. Dunhill said that the EH Highways Department had agreed to move the bollard situated on the sportsfield-hedge-side of School Lane closer to the other bollard.

f) Bus permits

Mr. Poulton and the Clerk issued the following bus permits.

42	x	full pension rate, at £9.50 each
6	x	income support rate, at £7.20 each
2	x	registered blind/disabled rate, at 6.10 each

The cost incurred by the Parish Council is £227.20, which represents a 50% contribution towards the cost of all permits issued.

g) Government threat to abolish Town and Parish Councils

Mr. Stock read out the following letter from Oliver Heald (dated 15th March).

'Further to my earlier correspondence, I was very concerned to read Michael Meacher's comments to MPs that he was considering reforms to Town and Parish Councils. I think it is important to "nip in the bud" any idea that Parish Councils should be abolished and replaced by Neighbourhood Forums. You may be interested to know that the vast majority responded, making it clear that they feel strongly that their role should not be deminished. I have passed these comments to Michael Meacher and we will have to see if proposals for change are included in his White Paper to be published later in the year.'

This letter was received after we had responded to Oliver Heald's earlier letter on the subject.

h) Future of the recycling site at Watton-at-Stone Primary School

Mr. Stock said that Mrs. McCash had asked for this item to be placed on the agenda.

Mrs. McCash reported that the Governors of the school would like the Parish Council to look for alternative sites for the village recycling facilities. Recently the school is experiencing problems with youngsters taking bottles from the recycling bins, drinking the dregs and then smashing the bottles. The broken glass has to be cleared-up before school opening times to avoid injury. Mrs. McCash said that when the recycling facilities were first installed, the school used to receive a small amount of money for glass, cans and paper. Now however, they do not receive any income and it is costing the school money to clear up the mess on a regular basis.

Mr. Stock said that he and Mr. Poulton had discussed this subject. Because it is difficult to identify another site for the recycling facilities, Mr. Stock proposed that Mr. Poulton (as a District Councillor and a Parish Councillor) attempts to negotiate a settlement with the school so that the facilities can be kept where they are. To this end, he also proposed that Mr. Poulton should offer a sum of up to £250 per year to the school, to be paid by us and raised via the precept. Mr. Meischke seconded the proposals and all present were in favour.

Action: N. Poulton

Mr. Stock also informed Parish Councillors that he was given to understand that EHDC is responsible for cleaning the site as required.

i) BT phone box - High Street

Mr. Stock said that Mr. Dunhill had noticed that the listed telephone box in the High Street had been repainted. However the crown had been over-painted in red. Mr. Dunhill therefore contacted the Clerk re the matter and, in turn, she contacted BT who informed her that the crown will be repainted gold. This item to remain on the agenda until completed.

j) Police surgery - 4th May 2000

PC John Ivens will hold his first surgery in Watton on 4th May 2000 between 6 pm and 7 pm.. This will be held in the Community Hall and no appointments are necessary. PC Ivens is keen to meet residents and discuss local issues.

Notices to be placed on the notice boards within the village and Whempstead to advertise this event. Also, the notices to be distributed to the various shops in the village and to the George and Dragon.

Action: J. Allsop

(Subsequent note: An advert will appear in the May issue of the Parish Magazine.)

k) Lamppost number 5 on Hockerill

Mr. Stock read out the following letter (dated 28th March) from Ray Moss, Street Lighting Inspector at EH Highways Partnership.

'Lamp column no. 5, Hockerill, is damaged at base (column possibly has been hit by grass cutter) and requires replacing. The cost to replace this would be approximately £700 complete.

If you would like this work to be carried out please contact me at the above address.'

Mr. Stock said that the lighting column is owned by the Parish Council. He then read out the following letter (dated 10th April) which we sent to Cornhill Insurance.

'Policy Number: 11/AC/5274013/06

We have been informed that lamp column no. 5, Hockerill, Watton-at-Stone is damaged and needs replacing.

The Parish Council contacted East Herts Highways Partnership regarding this broken light and was informed that it is the Parish Council's responsibility.

We are insured through yourselves for this light, but you will see from the attached letter that the Highways Department reckon that the column was damaged by being hit by a grass cutter.

The grass cutters are employed by East Herts District Council to cut the grass around this column. The Parish Council feels that it should, therefore, be the responsibility of the contractors to replace this light.

If you are in agreement, could the Parish Council ask you to write, as our insurers, to the contractor seeking recompense rather than claiming through our policy.

The contractors details are.

E. Covert Limited
 Unit 1, Potters Hall Business Park
 Potters Hall
 Dane End, Ware
 Hertfordshire SG12 0JU
 Tel: 01920 438105
 Fax: 01920 438102
 Contacts are: Mr. A. J. Cave - Local Manager
 Mr. A Comely - Area Manager

We await your comments.'

This item to remain under Specific Items until the matter has been resolved.

1) Bench on Hockerill slope

Mr. Stock reported that a new bench had been installed to replace the vandalised one. The commemorative plaque has been attached to the new bench.

Reimbursement for the cost of the bench and its installation is being claimed through Cornhill Insurance.

5 Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

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

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

Parish Councillors were copied at the meeting with the 12-monthly statement of accounts for the period ending the 31st March 2000.

Mr. Knight said that the Clerk had been unable to produce the statements earlier because she had not received the relevant bank statements. He then said that the statements both showed an increase in revenue as well as an increase in expenditure. Certain items showed an excessive budget over-expenditure, which was due to successful grant applications.

It was agreed that this item be placed on the agenda for the Parish Council meeting to be held on the 17th May 2000 so that all Parish Councillors can make their comments.

- **Audit of the Parish Council accounts for the year ending 31st March 2000**

Pannell Kerr Forster propose to start their audit work on 26th June 2000. It was agreed that the Parish Council should comply with these dates.

Mr. Knight to arrange a meeting of the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee before the Parish Council meeting to be held on the 17th May 2000 so that the audit figures can be discussed. **Action: I. Knight**

- **Cornhill Insurance - increased excess for malicious damage**

Mr. Stock read out the following letter from Cornhill Insurance (dated 4th April).

'Policy 11/AC/5274013 Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

The above policy falls due for renewal on 1 June 2000 and due to the claims history we have increased the excess for Malicious Damage to £200 with effect from renewal.

The renewal papers will follow shortly and if you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.'

After discussion, it was agreed to obtain a quotation from another insurance broker for all items currently covered under the Cornhill Insurance policy. **Action: H. McCash**

This item to be discussed at the next meeting of the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee. **Agenda: B & F**

Community Hall Trustees

Comment [C1]:

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

- **Damage to fire doors**

Because of the quotation obtained via Hertford Glass, Cornhill Insurance is now in possession of two quotations for the repair of the damaged fire door.

- **MPPA**

- **Applications for grant aid for re-surfacing project**

Mr. Stock reported that Mr. Poulton had applied to the following organisations for grant-aid for the shortfall amount of £2593 required for the re-surfacing project.

- EHDC
- Coutts Charitable Trust
- B.B.A. Group
- SQ Environmental Trust Limited (similar to HELP who grant aided the Watton Green project)

- **Contract with Doe Sport for re-surfacing**

Mr. Meischke reported that because of the size of the job, Doe Sport has asked for a deposit of £3,471.54p to enable them to book the re-surfacing of the MPPA for the week commencing the 7th September 2000. They also require two copies of a contract to be signed, and need to know the colours of surface required.

Mr. Meischke said that the colours for the MPPA had previously been agreed, and are to be light green and dark green.

Mr. Meischke to contact Doe Sport to see if there is any flexibility with regard to the amount of the deposit and when it should be paid.

Action: J. Meischke

Mr. Meischke proposed that, subject to the outcome of the above action point, the contract be signed by one of the Watton-at-Stone Community Hall Trustees and the deposit paid. Mrs. Dinnin seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: J. Meischke

- **Hand dryer in external toilets**

Mr. Meischke reported that the hand dryer in the Ladies toilets had been vandalised. Mr. Poulton received an electric shock from the dryer following a report from a member of public that the it was not working. He removed the fuse from the dryer to make it safe.

It was agreed that an electrician be contacted to carry-out the repair work.

Action: J. Meischke

Recreation & Amenities

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

- **Sportsfield fencing**

The repairs carried-out by the work party (refer to item 3 b, Review of actions - Organise a work party to repair the wooden fence on the sportsfield (on page 2 of these minutes) have much improved the general condition of the fence. It was agreed that this was a cost-effective way of maintaining the fence.

Mr. Meischke thanked the members of the work party for their efforts.

- **Cricket Club - sight screens**

Mr. Meischke read out the following letter (dated 11th April) from Cled Fursland, Treasurer of the Watton-at-Stone Cricket Club.

'Further to our recent request via the Sports & Social Club to install sight screens on the cricket field I enclose a picture of the type of screen that we are interested in. We have opted for the traditional type for two reasons (a) they look the part and, in our opinion, are more visually acceptable (b) are considerably heavier than modern types thus making them less likely to be moved unofficially. During the season the screens would be left at each end of the field in line with the cricket square and immobilised by a padlock chain or rod through the wheels. It is not possible to dismantle these screens and therefore during the winter it is proposed to store them either in the top right hand corner of the field adjacent to school land or in the bottom left hand corner by the tennis courts, immobilised of course.

I look forward to your comments on this matter.'

Parish Councillors agreed that the style of sight screen was acceptable. Mr. Stock proposed that the Watton-at-Stone Cricket Club be granted permission to purchase the sight screens on condition that no advertising is placed on them. Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Roller**

Mr. Meischke confirmed that the roller is now secured.

- **MPPA - floodlight**

Mr. Meischke reported that there had been a problem with the floodlighting coin-machine. Users were unable to put coins into the machine because it was jammed-up with drinking straws. Mr. Meischke said that he spent two hours on Thursday evening removing the straws, he also removed £28 in floodlighting money. It was agreed that, unfortunately, nothing can be done to the coin machine to prevent this problem happening again.

Environment

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

- **Watton Green**

Mr. Stock said that, due to other commitments, he has made no further progress on the artwork for the information board.

He then reported that he and Mr. Dunhill had received a letter from the Countryside Management Service (dated 21st March) advising the Parish Council that it should arrange for the areas of land recovered by scrub clearance to be cut back on a regular basis. This would enable the grasses and more valuable herbaceous plants a chance to colonise. It may take a few years for the cleared patches to come back to grassland, and many years to become as diverse as the rest of the green.

The Countryside Management Service suggests two ways of getting the weeds and nettles under control.

- Use a sturdy petrol driven lawn mower on a high cut setting.

Use local people, registered as Countryside Management Service volunteers, using Countryside Management Service owned brush cutters. Any person interested in taking on this work would be given adequate training in the safe use of the machines as well as the necessary personal protective equipment. Volunteers would have limited personal accident cover and standard Countryside Management Service public liability insurance.

Mr. Stock reported that Mr. Poulton, Mr. Dunhill and himself would be willing to receive training.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Village Pump**

Mr. Stock said that all invoices relating to the LEAF grant had been submitted to EHDC for reimbursement before the 31st March 2000 as requested. To date, most have been paid.

Mr. Filer confirmed that no work had yet been done to treat the wooden structure. It was agreed that it would help if Mr. Filer sent a personal letter to Mr. Abel Smith asking him to complete this work as soon as possible.

Action: D. Filer

- **Traffic-calming and safety of crossing in Station Road**

Mr. Stock said that he was far from happy with the progress on this subject and had expressed his great disappointment to David Standen and Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership). We had expected to receive draft plans for this scheme during early February, and then during early April. Nothing has been received so far. He was told that the delays had been caused by sickness, changes in organisation and priorities etc.

Mr. Stock spoke to David Standen today and was told that the work to install a raised footpath over the bridge is programmed for May/June. This work involves laying a raised kerb from the existing lay-by to the other side of the bridge. Single solid white-lines will then be laid on both sides of the road over the bridge.

We now have tree options.

- 1) Do nothing.
- 2) Wait and see if the footpath and white lines slow traffic down. (This is what Mr. Standen suggested we could do).
- 3) Inform EH Highways Partnership (in writing) that we want to receive, without further delay, plans for a scheme to slow down traffic in the vicinity of the bridge as discussed previously.

Mr. Stock proposed that option 3 was the only realistic option and we needed to act quickly. If not, he felt that further delays would occur due to other projects being assigned priorities and funding ahead of us. Mr. Filer seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Mrs. McCash to write to Mr. Standen and Mr. Jack accordingly.

Action: H. McCash

i) **Report**

Mr. Clark carried-out the sportsfield report on the 16th April, the result of which is as follows.

- **Sportsfield:**
 - Condition of grass Good.
 - Litter Very little.
 - Dog-waste bin and fouling Good.
 - Netball posts Poor.
 - General Good.
- **Children’s Playground:**
 - Condition of surface OK.
 - Litter/Litter bin Some litter around this area.
 - Large swings Seats are all damaged.
 - Small swings OK.
 - See-Saw Needs oiling.
 - Slide OK.
 - Comments More equipment, especially climbing frames would be well used.
- **Community Hall:**
 - General Condition (Exterior) Some chalked graffiti.
 - Litter bin In use.
 - Car Park OK.
 - General Litter.
- **Multi-Purpose Play Area:**
 - Surface OK.
 - Boundary Fencing Good.
 - Tennis nets Need repair.
 - Litter Inner case flattened and u/s - dealt with.
 - General In full use. Broken notice above gate.
- **Great Innings Play Area:**
 - Equipment Good condition.
 - Surfaces OK.
 - Litter A little especially round basketball court.
 - Dog-waste bin and fouling None.
 - Comments One basketball stand down.
- **Allotments Area:**
 - Access OK.
 - Condition of paths between allotments Good.
 - Condition of Allotments under cultivation Good.
 - Condition of Allotments not under cultivation Dumping of waste matter evident.
 - Litter Some near entrances.
 - Comments -
- **Culverts on Mill Lane**
 - Litter and rubbish in and around culverts Some - but bin overflowing.
 - Dog-fouling Very little.
 - Comments Clean & tidy, no evidence of planting scheme yet by Mill buildings
- **Salt bins**
 - Perrywood Lane 1/2 full.
 - Great Innings 1/2 full.
 - Station Road 3/4 full.
 - Moorymead Close 1/4 full.
 - Hazeldell 3/4 full.
- **Dog-waste bins**
 - Footpath 17 OK, surrounding area littered.
 - Sportsfield OK.
 - Church Walk OK.
 - Walkern Road OK.
 - Station Road Full of bags.
 - High Street (by Memorial) Ill fitting lid.

6 Planning

a) Applications

i) Crowbury, Church Lane

New building for 4-car garage & leisure facilities

Parish Councillors studied the plans for this application

After lengthy discussion by Parish Councillors no objections were raised.

The Clerk to inform EHDC that the Parish Council has no comment on this application. **Action: J. Allsop**

ii) 20 Lammas Road

Small rear conservatory

Mr. Stock said that Mrs. Dinnin had visited the residents of the neighbouring properties. Because no objections were received, the Clerk wrote to the Planning Department stating that the Parish Council has no comment on this application.

Parish Councillors looked at the plans for this application and agreed with the decision.

iii) 39 Station Road

Two storey side extension with porch

Mr. Stock said that Mr. Poulton had visited the residents of the neighbouring properties. Because no objections were received, the Clerk wrote to the Planning Department stating that the Parish Council has no comment on this application.

Parish Councillors looked at the plans for this application and agreed with the decision.

iv) Land off School Lane -Amended scheme

Erection of 2 detached dwelling houses & 1 bungalow, incorporating access, parking, landscaping etc.

Parish Councillors studied the plans for this application.

After lengthy discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council had to object to this application for the same reasons that it objected to the previous application for this site. It was therefore agreed that the following letter be sent to EHDC.

'The Parish Council continues to support the views of local residents in objecting to the above application in that:

- any additional traffic on School Lane would represent an unacceptable increased risk to pedestrians, particularly children, accessing the Primary School and the Playschool
- traffic accessing the High Street at this point will increase
- the access to and from School Lane, at its junction with the High Street, is hazardous and dangerous
- this area is already overdeveloped
- the Parish Council would like to see no further development in the heart of the village.'

Action: J. Allsop

b) Decisions

None (Refer to 10 Chairman's report on page 13 of these minutes).

c) Applications withdrawn

D) 10 Rectory Lane

Two storey side and rear extension. Amended scheme.

Application withdrawn.

7 Correspondence received

a) HCC - Notification of works in Church Lane

EH Highways Partnership has written (letter dated 20th March 2000) to notify us that Church Lane will be closed to traffic from 25th April to the 28th May due to cabling and poing work.

b) Watton-at-Stone Primary School - request for use of Community Hall for sponsored skipping event on 19/5/00

Mr. Stock read out a letter from Mrs. Rita Leader, PE Co-ordinator at Watton Primary School, requesting the free use of the sports hall for a charity skipping-event on 19th May in aid of the British Heart Foundation.

Mr. Stock proposed that the school be given the facilities required free of charge. Mr. Filer seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: J. Allsop

c) Watton-at-Stone Primary School - venue for emergency evacuation situation

Mr. Stock read out the following letter from Chris Cantes (Headteacher, Watton-at-Stone Primary School).

‘We have been advised that the school should have made all attempts to ensure a suitable venue to evacuate to in case of any emergency situation. With this in mind a logical choice would be the Community Hall.

I am writing to request that the Parish Council give consideration to the hall being used for such a purpose, bearing in mind that we would need a guaranteed access facility. It would be the schools intention to attempt to have all children collected as soon as possible, retaining only those that could not be collected until 3.15 pm.

I will give more details to Charles Clark and Helen McCash, two school governors so that they have knowledge of the nature of this request.

In addition the school is always looking at ways in which it can improve its environment, and with this in mind, I would like to request that should the Parish Council have any funds for such purposes the school would be grateful to receive a donation’

Mr. Stock proposed that the school be allowed the use of the Community Hall facilities for the purpose of an emergency evacuation situation. Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Watton Primary School to be informed accordingly and given a list of current key-holders and their telephone numbers.

Action: J. Allsop

d) Countryside Management Service - re Watton Green and the Lammas field

This item was discussed under 5 a , Environment Sub-Committee - Watton Green (on page 7 of these minutes).

e) Oliver Heald - re Government threat to abolish Town and Parish Councils

This item was discussed under 4 g, Government threat to abolish Town and Parish Councils (on page 10 of these minutes).

f) SQ Environmental - re grant application resurfacing of MPPA

Mr. Stock read out a letter (dated 16th March) from SQ Environmental acknowledging receipt of our application for grant-aid towards the re-surfacing work at the MPPA and stating that the requests for grant aid far outstrip the funds available for the year.

g) Oliver Heald - re successful bid from grant aid from Awards for All

Mr. Stock read out a letter from Oliver Heald MP (dated 30 March 2000) congratulating the Parish Council on its successful bid for £3,225 from the Awards for All scheme for the re-surfacing of the MPPA.

h) (Item deleted)

i) Tennis Club - Tennis nets

Mr. Stock read out the following letter (dated 23rd March) from the Watton-at-Stone Tennis Club.

‘The tennis nets at the MPPA are now in poor condition.

It was resolved at the last Tennis Club Committee Meeting that the Tennis Club will pay for new nets.

We would propose that they be purchased through the Parish Council so that VAT is recovered.’

Mrs. McCash confirmed that the nets could be purchased through either the Parish Council or the Community Hall and that the Tennis Club could make their reimbursement in the form of a donation. The Clerk asked for the tennis nets to be ordered through the Watton-at-Stone Community Hall because they are an item for the MPPA. Mr. Knight said that he would arrange to do this.

Action: I. Knight

j) HCC - re Regional Planning Guidance for the South East and the treat from house building

All Parish Councillors were copied with HCC’s letter from Mrs. Jane Pitman (dated 4th April) prior to this meeting.

Mr. Stock proposed that we write to HCC to express our serious concern about any plans which would result in a further erosion of the Green Belt, increase traffic and pollution, and put an increased strain on existing services (e.g. transport, water). This area has had more than its fair share of development in recent years, and continues to do so.

He said that we can then wait for HCC’s response to the Government (due after 23rd May) and decide whether or not we want to use it as the basis for our response to the Government before 12th June.

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

Action: J. Allsop

Note that HCC’s response and our response to the Government fall between the Parish Council meetings in May and June. The Clerk to remind Mr. Poulton and Mr. Stock to respond accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**

k) EHDC - Ancient Oak Tree adjacent to 99 Great Innings South

Mr. Stock read out the following letter from Ms. Greenwood, Landscape Officer at EHDC (dated 4th April).

'Thank you for your letter of the 21st March.

I am pleased to say that Wimpey have now fenced off this tree to avoid any disturbance or over-run of vehicles over the root plate. On inspecting the tree several weeks ago I noted that no contravention had occurred and the ground below the tree had not been disturbed.

The tree is in actual fact on land owned by the District Council. A further phase of building is scheduled to be submitted in the vicinity of the Oak tree although details have not been formalised. At present the tree is not under threat from development, however, if it is perceived that housing will be situated too near to the tree in future the District Council will be able to act and serve a tree preservation order. This is not considered necessary at this particular moment in time. I will monitor the situation closely and will keep you informed of this issue.'

Mr. Stock said that this was not acceptable and, after discussion, he proposed that the Parish Council send a strong formal request to EHDC asking for a tree preservation to be placed on this tree immediately. Mr. Meischke seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop

l) Letter from Watton Youth Club

Mr. Stock read out a letter from Jeanette Williams (see attached) announcing the resignation of herself, her husband and two other members of the Watton Youth Club Committee.

See attached

Mr. Stock is given to understand that Sarah Davies, the youth organiser who originally started up the current Youth Club, is to become involved again. Mr. Poulton has arranged to meet with Sarah Davies and PC Ivens after the end of the police surgery on the 4th May. After much discussion on the subject of the Youth Club, it was agreed that Mrs. Dinnin (as our Youth Club representative) would also attend the meeting together with Mr. Meischke and Mr. Knight (as representatives of the Sports & Social Club). Mr. Meischke suggested to Mr. Knight that links should be forged and strengthened between the Youth Club and the Sports & Social Club.

Action: N. Poulton/C. Dinnin/J. Meischke/I. Knight

This item to be placed under Specific Items.

Agenda: 5/00

m) Oliver Heald - Policing rural areas

Mr. Stock read out the following letter from Oliver Heald MP (dated 23rd March)

'Many thanks for your letter of 16 March. I was very grateful to you for responding to my request for information.

As you may know, I have recently been appointed to the Opposition Front Bench Home Affairs Team and my particular area of interest will be policing matters generally. You may be assured that I will take every opportunity to draw the Government's attention to the difficulties facing rural areas.'

n) Doe Sport - resurfacing contract for MPPA

This item was discussed under 5 a, Community Hall Trustees - MPPA (on page 6 of these minutes).

o) Hertfordshire Constabulary - re response to request for details on incidents reported to the police

Mr. Stock read out the following letter from PC Ivens (dated 10th April)

'Thank you for your kind comment regarding my attendance at the Parish Council meeting of the 15th of March.

In response to your letter of the 1st March, Mr. Charles Hinde, Hertfordshire Police Research Assistant, and I have put together some statistics which may assist with your request for information on public nuisance or quality of life issues. We had provided a summary of recorded crime in the Watton-at-Stone area between April 1999 and January 2000 indicating a total of 67 crimes and presenting a general breakdown. (Copy attached)

With regard to your request for information on telephone calls received by police in respect of Watton-at-Stone we have calculated that around 230 have been received between 1st April 1999 and 31st March 2000. It has been difficult to categorise the calls into public nuisance/quality of life issues without having a specific definition. However, a search focusing on youth nuisance, disorder and suspicious incident categories has shown that around 20% of all calls to police related to these issues.

We hope this information will be of use to you, but please do not hesitate to let me know if I can be of any further assistance.'

It was agreed to write to PC Ivens thanking him for his response and asking him to supply similar information to the Parish Council on a quarterly basis.

Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop

p) EHDC - Annual playground inspection

EHDC has written (letter dated 5th April) inviting the Parish Council to have its annual playground inspection undertaken by RoSPA at the same time as EHDC. This would remove the requirement for the Parish Council to organise the inspection itself and there would be a saving to everyone concerned due to the economy of scale.

It was previously agreed at the Parish Council meeting held on 16th June 1999 that we would like to be included in the EHDC annual RoSPA playground inspection from this year (i.e. the year 2000).

EHDC to be notified accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

8 Reports from other Organisations

• **Watton-at-Stone School Governors**

Mrs. McCash reported that the Watton-at-Stone School Governors had made the following elections.

Mrs. Jackie Dicks is now Chairperson

Mrs. Morage Green is now Vice Chairperson

The school has had to turn down the Playschool's application to use the mobile classrooms because they require them due to an increase in pupil numbers. Mrs. McCash said that Watton Playschool is having difficulties in obtaining a new lease from HCC on their existing site in School Lane.

9 Accounts/Correspondence

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash

Payments

Grass seed & weed killer	31.98
Envelopes	15.71
Cash banked	<u>160.00</u>
	<u>207.69</u>

Receipts

Bus permits	<u>227.20</u>
	<u>227.20</u>

Cheques required

Pannell Kerr & Forster	Audit fee for 98/99	381.87
Glasdon UK	Seat	365.02
HCC	Footway lighting	307.23
Watton Nursery	Plants for village pump site	76.18
EHDC	Bus permits for 2000/01	454.40
Boardmans Photocopying	Charges to 31/03/00	13.16
K. Jones	60 hours litterpick	254.00
Inland Revenue	Tax & NIC	177.93
D. Chandler	8 hours litterpick	33.92
J. Allsop	Cable phone calls to 4/4/00	<u>26.42</u>
		<u>2090.13</u>

Cheques received

EHDC	Leaf grant	388.00
Parish Paths Partnership	Additional grant for re-vetment project	113.00
J. Allsop	ref. Tax & NI deductions	<u>34.56</u>
		<u>535.56</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash

Payments

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Receipts

Floodlighting to 21/3/00	112.00
Jim Keen - Main Hall hire	<u>80.00</u>
	<u>192.00</u>

Cheques required

D. Bunyan	service water heater	142.18
D. Chandler	4 hours work	16.96
Customs & Excise	VAT return for 2/00	37.23
Business Gas	to 30/3/00	713.44
HCC	Cleaning materials	38.79
D. Bunyan	Repair work to boiler	301.40
Mrs. C. Bewley	32 hours cleaning	160.00
		<u>1410.00</u>

Cheques received

Conservation Society	Pavilion hire	10.50
Colin Straker	Main Hall hire	<u>16.00</u>
		<u>26.50</u>

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

10 Chairman's / Clerk's Report

Mr. Stock reported on the following items received.

- **Waggon & Horses Public House - Transfer of Licensee**

Mr. Stock read out a letter from Emjay Agency Limited (letter dated 18th April) stating that Myrtle Jeannette Thacker, the current licensee at the Waggon & Horses Public House, is intending to apply to the Licensing Sessions on Tuesday 6th June at 10 am. for the transfer of licensee into both her name and that of her son Dean Leonard James Oliver.

- **Peep into the Past Videos**

We have now received these videos, ready for sale during the Wotton-at-Stone Millennium Mayfayre and Truck Pull.

Mr. Dunhill to produce a poster to advertise the videos as soon as possible.

Action: V. Dunhill

- **May meetings**

The following meetings will run consecutively on Wednesday 17th May 2000, starting at 7.00 p.m.

- Annual Parish Meeting
- Annual Meeting of the Parish Council
- Parish Council Meeting

Mr. Stock said that he had invited Mr. Ron Jack, our new Parish Engineer at EH Highways Partnership, to the Parish Council meeting so that he could introduce himself to us and give Parish Councillors an opportunity to ask him questions.

- **Parish Map**

Parish Councillors studied the updated Parish Map and gave their comments to Mr. Meischke. It was agreed that the map will be attractive item.

- **Blue Hill Farm**

Mr. Stock said that although the Conservation Society had been notified that permission had been granted for a mobile dwelling on this site, we had not. All Parish Councillors expressed their concern that granting permission for a mobile dwelling could be followed up by permission for a permanent dwelling.

It was agreed to ask Mr. Poulton, as a District Councillor to find out the reasons why permission was refused for a permanent dwelling but granted for a mobile one, and why we were not notified of the outcome.

Action: N. Poulton

- **The meeting closed at 10.00 p.m.**

- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 17th May 2000.**