

A meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council was held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 21st February 2001 at 7.15 p.m.

Present:	Mr. D. Stock (Vice-Chairman)	Mr. C. Clark
	Mrs. S. Davies (after 7.20 pm)	Mr. V. Dunhill
	Mrs. C. Dinnin	Mr. D. Filer
	Mrs. H. McCash	Mr. I. Knight
	Mr. J. Meischke (after 7.19 pm)	
Member of Public:	Mr. E. Riddle	

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

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Poulton.

2 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

• **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 20th December**

Mrs. McCash proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record. Mr. Filer seconded the motion and all present at that meeting were in favour.

Mr. Stock said that Mr. Clark needed to leave the meeting early, and therefore asked that the action points and items relating to Mr. Clark be taken first. This was agreed.

b) Review of actions

• **Write to Chris Cantes (Headteacher at Watton-at-Stone Primary School) re dog-fouling**

Mr. Clark said that he had spoken (not written) to Chris Cantes about dog-fouling. However, to his knowledge, no advertisement has been placed in the school newsletter asking parents who see dogs fouling footpaths etc. to 'name and shame' the owners.

Mr. Clark said that when he was walking though the village last Sunday he did not notice any evidence of dog-fouling in the area of footpath 17.

• **Provide a copy of the Watton Primary School OFSTED report for circulation**

This action point has been completed.

• **Inform the Parish Council of the parents' comments on the OFSTED report and outline the proposed action plan**

Refer to item 3 c, Report on outcome of OFSTED report at Watton Primary School (on page 3 of these minutes).

4 Reports

b Sportsfield

i) Report

Mr. Clark carried-out the sportsfield report on the 18th February, the result of which is as follows.

• **Sportsfield:**

Condition of grass	Good.
Litter	Not much on field, broken liner in bin near Rectory.
Dog-waste bin and fouling	No problems.
Netball posts	Two! But only one net hung properly.
General	Drain hole by cricket square has lid/grate missing! Broken rails along horses field behind MPPA. Goal post bar on field.

• **Children's Playground:**

Condition of surface	OK.
Litter/Litter bin	½ Full.
Large swings	OK.
Small swings	OK.
See-Saw	OK.
Slide	OK.
Comments	Well used.

• **Community Hall:**

General Condition	Good.
Litter bin	½ full, no liner in bin.
Car Park	Clean and tidy. Cross bar on grass, mud outside changing rooms.
General	No paper in toilets, lights on in changing rooms.

• **Multi-Purpose Play Area:**

Surface	Clean.
Boundary Fencing	One missing bolt on far side from footpath, some loose nuts and bolts.
Tennis nets	Two up in good condition.
Litter	OK.
General	Top of wire netting and barbed wire needs some attention.

• **Great Innings Play Area:**

Equipment	Good condition.
Surfaces	Good.
Litter	Some.
Dog-waste bin and fouling	None.
Comments	Graffiti on notice board.

• **Allotments Area:**

Access	OK.
Condition of paths between Allotments	Good.
Condition of Allotments	Good.
Cultivation	
Condition of Allotments not under cultivation	OK.
Litter	Some around entrance in Church Walk.
Comments	Not bad but winter conditions.

• **Culverts on Mill Lane**

Litter and rubbish in and Culverts	Some litter around bench bushes.
Dog-fouling	A little.
Comments	Land drain running.

• **Salt bins**

Perrywood Lane	Full.
Great Innings	$\frac{3}{4}$ full.
Station Road	$\frac{3}{4}$ full.
Moorymead Close	$\frac{3}{4}$ full.
Hazeldell	$\frac{2}{3}$ full.

• **Dog-waste bins**

Footpath 17	OK – lots of litter along footpath.
Sportsfield	OK
Church Walk	OK.
Walkern Road	In use.
Station Road	In use.
High Street (by Memorial)	OK.
Great Innings	OK.
General Comments:	Mill Lane in use. Lots of litter around the village. No paper in toilets.

• **Litterbins on sportsfield**

The Clerk to ask Mr. Poulton to inspect the two litterbins on the sportsfield and arrange for replacement bin liners as required. **Action: N. Poulton/J. Allsop**

• **Water meter inspection cover**

Mr. Clark said that he had informed Cled Fursland (Cricket Club) about the missing inspection cover on the water meter. Because of the potential danger of someone injuring themselves, Mr. Stock asked Mr. Knight to pursue this item via the Sports & Social Club. Mr. Knight to confirm that action is being taken to replace the missing cover. **Action: I. Knight**

• **Litterpicking**

Mr. Clark said that he had noted a lot of litter in the area of footpath 17 and in Station Road. After some discussion it was agreed that there were some problem areas in the village, but the High Street was in a very good condition. Mr. Stock asked all Parish Councillors to monitor the presence/absence of litter from now until our meeting in March (during which the subject of litter will be discussed under Specific Items). **Action: All Parish Councillors**

3 Specific Items

g) HCC – School admissions for the year 2002-2003

Mr. Clark reported that there is no change in the basic rules for admission. In essence, the changes are to vary the rules from a preferential choice to a ranking system. The effect of the change is that in the event of over subscription, preference will be given to applicants closest to a school. It was agreed that the geographically closest school might not be the most convenient one, as it might not have adequate public transport etc.

It was agreed that Mr. Clark drafts a letter to be sent to HCC outlining this view.

Action: C. Clark

c) Report on outcome of OFSTED report at Watton Primary School

Due to the sensitive nature of Mr. Clark's report, Mr. Stock asked Mr. Riddle to leave the meeting whilst the subject was being discussed. Mr. Riddle agreed and left the meeting accordingly.

Mr Clark outlined the contents of the OFSTED report and the subsequent parents' meeting at the school. He also outlined current progress on the action plan, and the relationships/communication between the LEA, the Board of Governors and the staff at the school.

The subject was discussed at length and serious concerns were raised about the contents of the report, the proposed action plan and the reputation of the school.

It was agreed that we consider the outcome of a forthcoming meeting between Mr. Clark, Mr. Poulton, Mr. Hammond (County Councillor) and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board of Governors.

Mr. Riddle returned to the meeting

Mr. Clark left the meeting at 8.03 pm.

b) Review of actions

- **Chase Hertfordshire police for article re Special Police Constable and place advertisement in parish magazine**

Mrs. Davies said that this action point was still outstanding.

Action: S. Davies

- **Try to remove graffiti on Community Hall brick work**

Mr. Meischke said that this action point was still outstanding

Action: J. Meischke

- **Chase HCC Rights of Way Department re reinstatement of the Church Walk barrier**

Mr. Dunhill reported that the HCC contractors had been instructed to install a new re-designed barrier for Church Walk. The work is expected to be carried-out within the next month.

This item to be placed on the agenda under Specific Items until the barrier has been installed.

- **Place Ashwell Village Statement on circulation**

This action point has been completed.

- **Report on RoSPA annual playground inspection**

This item to be discussed under 4 a, Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee – RoSPA – Annual playground inspection (on page 7 of these minutes).

- **Find out the price of a boot-scraper for MPPA**

This item to be discussed under 4 a, Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee – Boot scraper (on page 7 & 8 of these minutes).

- **Chase CMS re wildlife and plant illustrations for Watton Green information board**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 4 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Watton Green (on page 8 of these minutes).

- **Contact MAFF re Lammas tree planting**

Mr. Dunhill reported that he has now received the MAFF forms for the revised Lammas planting scheme. Mr. Dunhill to complete the forms and Mr. Poulton to sign them before our meeting in March.

Action: V. Dunhill/N. Poulton

- **Contact Jeff Skidmore re no further action for installing litterbin on Lammas**

This action point has been completed.

- **Place on permanent record and display on the Community Hall notice board a list of the contents of the Time Capsule**

This action point has been completed.

- **Send letter of thanks to Allan Rattue and the Watton-at-Stone Millennium Mayfayre & Truck Pull Committee for their contributions to the exhibition**
This action point has been completed.
- **Advertise sale of Parish Map in the Parish Magazine and at various locations within the village**
This action point has been completed.
- **Contact British Telecom and ask them to reinstate door to the telephone box at Station Road/Glebe Close**
The Clerk said that she contacted British Telecom (on 151) shortly after January's Parish Council meeting, asking them to reinstate the door to the telephone box. However, when she spoke to them today they had no record of her earlier call. British Telecom has now issued a fault number, which can be used to contact them again further re this matter. If the door has not been reinstated within two weeks, British Telecom to be contacted again.
Action: J. Allsop
- **Copy all Parish Councillors with the minute extracts re the salt bins**
This action point has been completed.
- **Order rock salt and then ask Jeff Skidmore to fill all the salt bins in the village**
This action point has been completed.
- **Identify the HCC department responsible for the footbridge at the southern end of village and then contact them accordingly**
This item to be discussed under item 3 a, Specific Items - Wooden footbridge over River Beane at southern-end of village (adjacent to Watton Nursery), on page 5 of these minutes.
- **Write to Mike Abbey (Dog Warden at EHDC) re name and address of owner whose dog was repeatedly fouling**
Mrs. McCash reported that the dog in question died on the day of the last Parish Council meeting; therefore this action point has not been carried-out. Mr. Clark had reported earlier in the meeting that the amount of dog-fouling in the area of footpath 17 over the past month has been minimal.
- **Write to Chris Cantes (Headteacher at Watton-at-Stone Primary School) re dog-fouling**
This item was discussed at the beginning of the meeting (on page 1 of these minutes).
- **Advertise dates of Parish Council meetings for the civic year 2001/2002 on the Parish Council notice boards and in the Parish magazine**
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to EHDC and Watton-at-Stone Millennium Mayfayre committee re Ornate Village Sign**
This action point has been completed.
- **Provide a copy of the Watton Primary School OFSTED report for circulation**
This item was discussed at the beginning of the meeting (see page 1 of these minutes).
- **Inform the Parish Council of the parents' comments on the OFSTED report and outline the proposed action plan**
This item was discussed under 3 c, Specific Items - Report on outcome of OFSTED report at Watton Primary School, at the beginning of this meeting (see page 3 of these minutes).
- **Fit new floodlighting meter and return the faulty meter for repair**
This item to be discussed under 4 a, Community Hall Trustees – Minutes and report on meeting held on 14th February 2001 (on page 7 of these minutes).
- **Arrange for a replacement notice board to be made for the MPPA**
Mr. Meischke said that this action point would be carried-out when the re-surfacing of the MPPA had taken place. This action point to be removed from the list.
- **Arrange a site meeting with Jono Meischke to discuss the artwork for the information board at Watton Green**
This action point has been completed.
Refer to item 4 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Watton Green (on page 8 of these minutes).
- **Inform all Parish Councillors of the date and time of the meeting with Jono Meischke**
This action point has been completed.
- **Chase FRCA for derogation order request for the Lammas**
Mr. Dunhill reported that he had today received the request forms from the FRCA for the derogation order. A derogation order is required to allow the Parish Council to spray the weeds on the Lammas.

Mr. Dunhill to complete the forms and return them to the FRCA.

Action: V. Dunhill

- **Order footpath signs needed within the parish**

Mr. Dunhill said that this action point is outstanding. He needs to check the exact wordings for the footpath signs before they are ordered.

Action: V. Dunhill

- **Write to Andrew Mills (at EHDC) re lifted section of rubber matting on the slide at the Great Innings play area**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 6 g, Correspondence received – EHDC – Great Innings play area matting (on page 10 of these minutes).

- **Renew SLCC annual membership**

This action point has been completed.

- **File for permanent record Tree Preservation Order (no 7) 2000**

This action point has been completed.

- **Inform the Police that we do not require the e-mailer facility and give them our e-mail address**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to Mr. Robey re representative for the Meditation and Remembrance Garden project working party**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to Chauffeur Line re Rural Transport Initiative**

This action point has been completed.

- **Instruct Football Club to address problem of the dirty state of the away-team changing rooms**

Mr. Knight said that he had spoken to the Football Club and that this matter was also discussed at the last Sports & Social Club meeting. They have agreed to do the best they can.

Mr. Meischke said that the Football Club had left the external store cupboard in a disgusting state.

- **Write to EHDC re use of Community Hall facilities on 3rd May 2001 for elections purposes**

This action point has been completed.

- **Put up EHDC posters on the Parish Council notice boards and in the Community Hall re vacancies at polling stations**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to CDA Rural Enterprise Project re use of Community Hall facilities**

This action point has been completed.

Mr. Stock said that no response to our letter had been received to date.

3 Specific Items

a) **Wooden footbridge over River Beane at southern-end of village (adjacent to Watton Nursery)**

The Clerk reported that the HCC bridges department at County Hall are responsible for this bridge. She spoke to Steve Minton on 19th January who said that the bridge was pressure-jetted immediately after the accident and they were monitoring the situation to see if any further action needs to be taken. Later that morning Chris Yates rang to say that he had just inspected the site and confirmed that the surface of the bridge was very slippery. He said there were two options.

One is to pressure-wash and moss-kill the surface regularly. The other option is to do something about the actual surface of the bridge.

Chris Yates said that he was obtaining quotations with regard to the second option, i.e. to add non-slip treads to the existing surface or to add a new surface to the bridge (which would be made off-site and then attached to the existing bridge).

The Clerk asked him if it would be a good idea to put up notices warning that the surface was slippery. He said that by the time the signs had been made, the work to the bridge would probably be completed.

Chris Yates rang again during the week commencing the 5th February to say that they will be fixing non-slip treads to the surface of the bridge when the weather is dry, and in the meantime large signs will be erected to warn of the slippery surface.

Because there has been an accident on this bridge, it was agreed to write to Chris Yates asking him to confirm, in writing, the proposed modifications to the bridge.

Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop

b) Ornate Village Sign

Mr. Stock presented plans, received from Keith Bewley, for the ornate village sign and the site location map, which Parish Councillors looked at in detail. These will now be submitted to EHDC for approval.

Action: J. Allsop

c) Report on outcome of OFSTED report at Watton Primary School

This item was discussed at the beginning of the meeting (see page 3 of these minutes).

d) Playground equipment

Mrs. Davies had requested that this item be placed on the agenda. Mr. Stock asked for this item to be discussed under item 4 a, Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee - RoSPA – Annual playground inspection (on page 7 of these minutes). This was agreed by Mrs. Davies and the Parish Councillors.

e) Concrete fixture on Lammas

Mr. Stock read out the following letter (dated 11th January) from the Environment Agency.

‘Concreted fixture and associated wiring on the Lammas

I refer to your letter dated 11th January 2001 and to the subsequent message that I left on your answer machine service.

I can find no one in the Agency who has any knowledge of any wiring in the vicinity of Mill Lane other than our river level gauge boards (non electric). I am therefore unable to help in this particular case and can venture no opinions as to who the apparatus may belong to.

The only thing I can suggest is that you check with the owners/tenants of the offices in Mill Lane to see if they have any knowledge of the wires.’

Mr. Stock said that Mr. Poulton is willing to meet with the Environment Agency on-site to clarify the situation. This was agreed.

Action: N. Poulton

The Clerk to write accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

f) Flooding on the Walkern Road

Mr. Stock said that the Clerk had asked for this item to be placed on the agenda because she wanted it noted for the records that the Walkern Road has suffered from serious flooding at least four times in the last four months. On occasions, this has made the road impassable to traffic. Mr. Stock said that Mr. Poulton had been present whilst Ron Jack and his team pressure-washed the gullies on the Walkern Road. It is hoped that this work has rectified the problem.

g) HCC – School admissions for the year 2002-2003

This item was discussed at the beginning of the meeting (see page 3 of these minutes).

4 Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

Mrs. McCash reported on the following item concerning the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee.

• **Contract of employment**

Mrs. McCash said that the Clerk’s contract of employment has not been up-dated since November 1993. She will look at the existing contract and a recently-supplied model contract from the Society for Local Council Clerks and then arrange for a Budget & Finance Sub-Committee meeting to discuss this item.

Action: H. McCash

Community Hall Trustees

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

• **Minutes and report on meeting held on 14th February**

All Parish Councillors were copied with the minutes prior to today’s meeting.

Mr. Meischke went through the recommendations of the meeting as follows.

• **Guttering and roof tiles**

The Parish Council to instruct David Bunyan to repair all the roof guttering and replace any broken roof tiles.

• **Floor cleaning**

The Parish Council instructs the floor-cleaning contractors to clean the floors, when the internal decorating work has been completed, and that a floor sealant is applied in the pavilion and corridor area, provided that it meets all the health and safety regulations.

Mr. Meischke proposed that the recommendations of the Community Hall Trustees be accepted. Mrs. Dinnin seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Comment [C1]:

David Bunyan to be instructed accordingly

Action: N. Poulton

The Clerk to contact the floor-cleaning contractors and ask them to quote accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Painting of the MPPA surface**

Mr. Meischke said that Doe Sport confirmed that they would carry-out the work as soon as there was a sufficient period of dry weather to allow the surface of the MPPA to dry out.

- **Floodlighting meter**

Mr. Meischke reported that he had now repaired the faulty floodlighting meter. The new meter, which is being stored in the cupboard in the Parish Council room, will be kept as a spare.

Recreation & Amenities

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

- **RoSPA – Annual playground inspection**

Mr. Meischke said that he had compared the RoSPA annual playground inspection (carried out via EHDC in September 2000) with the one carried-out (in error) by RoSPA in May 2000. The discrepancies in the two reports appear to be due to typing errors.

Mr. Meischke said that he and Mr. Poulton had inspected all of the equipment and taken measurements where appropriate.

- **Large swings**

Basically, the large swings have no problems, but the report notes that there is poor spacing at the back of the swings. However, the hedge has been cut since the report was carried-out and the spacing is now good. If RoSPA highlights this as a problem in the future, the Parish Council could remove the concrete bench situated at the back of the swing. The eyebolts on the swing are loose and two seats need replacing.

- **See-saw**

The ground clearance at one end of the see-saw is less than the recommended guidelines. The clearances are 230 mm at one end and only 130 mm at the other. This is because the ground is not level under the see-saw. RoSPA consider this to be a low risk.

Mr. Meischke said that he thought there may be a mechanism in the see-saw that could be adjusted to prevent the see-saw from going down too far.

- **Cradle swings**

There are no problems with these swings. However, Mr. Meischke said that he had recently replaced a missing bolt from one of the cradle swing seats.

- **Slide**

The tread depths on the ladder are below the recommended guidelines and the leg supports half-way down the slide, which slope outwards away from the frame of the slide, are both considered to be low risk items. However, toggle entrapment on the slide is considered to be a medium risk item. Mr.

Meischke said that he thought that this would be easy to put right.

The problems with the play equipment were discussed.

Mr. Meischke proposed that we ask Wicksteed Leisure to supply and fit four seats for the large swings.

Also, that we ask them to repair the edge of the safety surface by the see-saw and inspect the see-saw, which has a clearance problem due to uneven safety surface. In addition, we invite RoSPA to a site meeting to discuss how best to rectify the problems with the slide. Mrs. Dinnin seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Meischke and Mr. Poulton to attend the site meeting with RoSPA. **Action: J. Meischke/N. Poulton**

Mrs. Davies then asked about the possibility of improving the play area and having additional equipment installed, and maybe relocating the whole site within the sportsfield.

Mr. Stock agreed that the play area was showing its age compared with that at Great Innings and we should therefore plan to up-grade it. He also outlined the history of the Great Innings play area and how it had been funded (not by the Parish Council).

After discussion, it was agreed by all that the current priority for this area was to rectify any problems to the existing equipment and that the Parish Council makes a budget provision for upgrading the site/new equipment in the future (the up-grading of the play area to be a priority item with regard to future planning gains). It was also agreed that when the repair work has been carried-out, the play equipment should be painted.

- **Boot scraper**

Mr. Meischke said that the Clerk had obtained a leaflet and prices on boot scrapers from County Supplies. Parish Councillors viewed these. Mr. Meischke proposed that two 'Sussex' style boot scrapers

be purchased for the MPPA and the Community Hall. Mr. Filer seconded the motion and all present were in favour **Action: J. Allsop**

The Clerk to ask Jeff Skidmore to quote for installing the two boot scrapers. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Footpath from MPPA**

Mr. Knight said that the Tennis Club has agreed to form a working party to re-lay the paving slabs from the MPPA to the gap in the hedge (because they are not level). This work will be carried-out as soon as possible.

- **Condition of Community Hall facilities**

It was agreed that a letter be sent to the Sports & Social Club (addressed to Mr. Knight) to complain about the way the Football Club is treating the Community Hall facilities. The external cupboard is currently in a very dirty and untidy condition and requires cleaning and tidying immediately. In addition, after football matches, the away-team changing rooms are continuing to be left in a poor state and the footpaths and walls nearest to the car park are covered in mud. Also, to formally advise them that we will be making a charge for cleaning the changing rooms and their surrounds when they are left in an unacceptable condition, and that the external cupboard must be cleaned out immediately, otherwise we will have no alternative but to have it cleaned and charge them accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Sports & Social Club – Annual hire agreement**

Mr. Knight said that there was no change in the Sports & Social Club's status at present and therefore the annual hire agreement still stands. Mr. Stock passed two copies of the agreement to Mr. Knight for signature and return for signing by Mr. Poulton. **Action: N. Poulton/I. Knight**

Environment

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

- **Watton Green**

Mr. Stock said that he had had a site meeting with Jono Meischke (which Mr. Dunhill also attended) to discuss the requirement for, and design of, the information board. Mr. Stock gave Jono Meischke the draft that we discussed during our meeting in January, plus a selection of example information boards and graphics provided by CMS.

We have now received a quotation of £500 for the graphic design work. Mr. Stock reminded Parish Councillors that we still had £600 of grant-aid available (i.e. £300 from HCC Environment, plus £300 from HELP). Some of this will be required to pay for the mounting and protection of the information board.

Mr. Stock proposed that Jono Meischke's quotation be accepted. Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour. **Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop**

- **Footpath over railway bridge at Station Road**

Mr. Stock was sad to report that vandals had destroyed all of the reflector posts on the recently completed footpath over the bridge. After clearing the debris from the road he asked the Clerk to report (in writing) the incident to the police; which she did.

Mr. Stock then informed Ron Jack, of the EH Highways Partnership, (in writing) of the damage and suggested that the multiple reflector posts are not reinstated but be replaced by one solid reflector post at either end of the footpath over the bridge. This would avoid a repetition of the damage and at the same time give drivers an obvious indication of the presence of the footpath.

During a subsequent telephone, conversation Ron Jack told Mr. Stock that he agreed that this may be the best course of action. We now await written confirmation from the EH Highways Partnership

Mrs. McCash said that there is now a drainage problem on the Datchworth-side of the bridge. It was agreed that the most likely cause is the reinstatement of the bank adjacent to the footpath. Currently the ditches are being cleared along this stretch of road, which may alleviate the problem. It was agreed that we monitor the situation and add the subject to a future agenda if the problem persists.

- **Traffic-calming Station Road**

At the Parish Council meeting held in November, it was agreed that this item be put on the agenda this month, i.e. after the footpath over the railway bridge had been installed.

Mrs. McCash felt strongly that we should pursue this item and Parish Councillors agreed that there was a continuing problem of excessive speed from drivers entering the village from Datchworth, as well as the other entrances to the village.

Mrs. Davies asked what sort of traffic-calming the Parish Council thinks should be implemented. Mr. Stock that the Parish Council always discussed such problems with EH Highways Department and then awaited their proposals.

Mrs. McCash to contact Ron Jack (EH Highways Department) to ask him for traffic-calming in this area.

Action: H. McCash

It was agreed that a letter be sent to the Police asking them to arrange for speed checks to be carried-out at each of the four main gateways to the village and that it would be a useful deterrent if such checks could be performed on a regular basis over a specific period. The Parish Council hopes that such actions would deter drivers from speeding, as has proved to be the case in other villages in the area (e.g. Waterford).

Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop

- **Lammas**

Mr. Dunhill said that he is looking into how many more trees we need to plant in accordance with the agreed planting plan.

Action: V. Dunhill

He said that he would need to order the additional shrubs required to replace the 2 – 3 metres of the hedge planted along the boundary of the Lammas and the adjacent horses field that had died.

Mr. Dunhill to order the planting required.

Action: V. Dunhill

b) Sportsfield

i) Report

This item was discussed at the beginning of the meeting (see pages 1 and 2 of these minutes).

5 Planning

a) Applications

i) Great Innings

4 no. 2 bedroom houses, 2 no. 1 bedroom houses, 4 no. 3 bedroom houses with access road

Parish Councillors studied the plans for this application

After discussion, it was agreed that we write to the planning department stating that the Parish Council has no objections to the application. However, we are concerned about the safety of the large Oak tree, which is protected by a TPO, and ask that they ensure that some physical protection is erected around the tree before any site activity begins. Such protection must be dimensioned so that it also ensures that the roots are not compounded in close proximity to the tree. In addition, requesting similar protection to be implemented for the Oak tree situated in the back garden of plot number 9 of the planning application.

Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop

It was also agreed, that we write to Liz Greenwood Landscape Officer at EHDC requesting a TPO for the second Oak tree (which is situated in the back garden of plot number 9 of the planning application) and copy her with our letter to the planning department.

Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop

ii) Cricket Ground

Tractor store

Mr. Stock reported that Mrs. Barbara Knight (a former Chairman of the Parish Council) had asked to look at the plans and then recalled that there maybe a Diocesan Glebe covenant on the land not to erect any building within one hundred and fifty feet of the south-western boundary. Subsequently, Mr. Poulton, Mr. Stock and the Clerk confirmed that there was such a covenant. Mr. Cled Fursland (Cricket Club) was informed accordingly.

A site meeting then took place on Friday 16th February, at which Mr. Poulton and Cled Fursland discussed with David Lacon of Rumball Sedgwick (the St. Albans Diocesan Board solicitors) the possibility of having the covenant on a section of the south-western boundary of the sportsfield lifted to enable the tractor shed to be sited there. Mr. Lacon took pictures and measurements on-site and agreed to report back to the Diocesan Board of Finance with a recommendation that they should consent to our request.

Parish Councillors studied the plans for this application.

Some Parish Councillors were concerned about the size of the store and its appearance.

After much discussion on the subject, Mr. Stock said that if the size and appearance of the store on the plans that we had approved previously were the same as that shown on this formal application, we could not really object. If the two sets of plans differ from each other, then we could react.

The Clerk to provide Mr. Stock with the plans submitted to us by Cled Fursland (Cricket Club) in October/November, and subsequently approved by the Parish Council.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Stock to contact each Parish Councillor tomorrow to let them know the outcome and agree an action.

Action: D. Stock

iii) 122 High Street

First floor side extension; carport to side; single storey rear and side extension

Parish Councillors studied the plans for this application.

Mr. Stock said that Mr. Poulton had visited one of the neighbours, who had no objections. The Memorial Hall is on the other side of this property.

After discussion, no objections were raised. However, Mrs. Davies expressed some caution about the possibility of future plans being submitted.

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

b) Decisions

None.

6 Correspondence received

a) Hertfordshire Constabulary

Mr. Stock said that two letters had been received from Jill Dockley (Community Safety Co-ordinator at Hertfordshire Constabulary). These letters to be placed on circulation. **Action: J. Allsop**

b) Hertfordshire Police Authority – Launch of Hertfordshire’s Policing Plan 2001/02

The Launch of Hertfordshire’s Policing Plan 2001/02 is on Monday 26th March at 3.30 pm in the Fielder Centre in Hatfield. Mr. Stock said that he was unable to go to the launch himself and invited other Parish Councillors to attend. Because nobody present was able to do so, Mr. Poulton will represent the Parish Council at the launch.

Action: N. Poulton

The Clerk to notify Hertfordshire Police authority accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Poulton to give his report on the Launch at the April Parish Council meeting. **Action: N. Poulton/04.01**

c) Village Halls advisory Services – Hertfordshire’s diary of village events 2001

Mrs. Dinnin to give this item to the Memorial Hall Committee.

Action: C. Dinnin

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

It was agreed that the Parish Council makes the same response as it did in June 2000, which is as follows.

‘Watton-at-Stone Parish Council urges the Government not to approve the proposals in which Hertfordshire could face an increase of 73% in the South East on its existing requirements of houses by 2016.

Please reject the Crow Report and put in place a planning strategy based on a more managed development for the South East.

Target the housing in urban areas to a level of a least 60%.

Ensure no new settlements in the region.

Allocate at least 40% of new houses to meet social needs.

Not to encroach any further into the Green Belt for land to be built on for housing.’

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

e) HCC – Ornate village sign

Mr. Stock read out the following letter (dated 30th January) from Tim Hagyard, Planning Officer at EHDC.

‘Village sign - Watton-at-Stone

I reply to your letter dated 19th January, received 23rd January 2001.

I would anticipate that this sign would be permitted by virtue of the “permitted development rights” which are given to local authorities for certain works by Par 12, Class A, of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 1995. No formal application for consent is required.

As the siting would likely be within the Watton-at-Stone Conservation Area, I would be grateful for a copy of plans showing the location and design for any observations this Council may have.

The plans received from Keith Bewley, for the ornate village sign and the site location map, will be submitted to EHDC for approval. (Refer to item 3 b, Ornate Village Sign on page 6 of these minutes.) **Action: J. Allsop**

f) Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust

The Hertfordshire Wildlife Sites Project has written (letter dated 29th January 2001) to inform us that Watton Green is a valuable site and they would help us to get funding for its management. Mr. Stock said that if we write to them they will put us in touch with appropriate organisations e.g. the CMS. Because we are already in contact with the CMS and other organisations, no further action is required.

g) EHDC – Great Innings play area matting

Mr. Stock said that EHDC had written (letter dated 24th January) to thank us for informing them about the rubber matting lifting around the slide. They have advised their contractors of the situation and will be undertaking the required works in the near future at no expense to the District.

h) CPRE – Hertfordshire’s village of the year competition

Mr. Stock said that we had received application forms for entering this competition. It was agreed that because of our experiences of the competition last year, we do not pursue this matter any further.

i) Environment Agency – Concrete fixture and associated wiring on the Lammas

This item was discussed under 3 e, Concrete fixture on Lammas (on page 6 of these minutes).

j) EHDC – Concessionary bus permit – bulk issue April 2001

A letter has been received from EHDC re the issue of bus permits for 2001. Mr. Stock said that all bus permits will now be free to men over 65, women over 60 and people who meet the current disability criteria.

Mr. Poulton and the Clerk have volunteered to issue bus permits on Saturday 7th April 2001 in the Community Hall between 10.00 am and 12.00 noon. To obtain a new bus permit, applicants will now be required to obtain a current passport-size photograph. Mr. Poulton has arranged for an appropriate advertisement in the parish magazine and posters for display within the village

It was agreed to notify EHDC accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

k) Datchworth Parish Conference 2001 – Thursday 15th March 2001

We have received an invitation from Datchworth Parish Council to attend the 2001 Inter Parish Conference that they are hosting on 15th March 2001.

- The 4 main topics on the agenda are:
1. Health
 2. Police
 3. Highways
 4. Footpaths

Although unable to attend this year, Mr. Stock said that these Inter-Parish Conferences were interesting and an excellent way for Parish Council’s to highlight and discuss problems and issues that effect us all. He therefore encouraged Parish Councillors to attend if possible.

No other Parish Councillors at the meeting were able to attend.

Mr. Poulton and the Clerk will represent the Parish Council.

The Clerk to inform Datchworth Parish Council accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

7 Reports from other Organisations

• **Methodist Church - Meditation and Remembrance Garden project**

Mrs. Davies said that she works on Thursdays and therefore had been unable to attend any of the Meditation and Remembrance Garden project lunchtime meetings. However, she had been kept up-dated on progress. Planning permission will need to be sort for the demolition of the front wall at the Methodist Church so that a new access can be formed to enter the garden.

• **Sport & Social Club**

Mr. Knight reported that the Sports & Social Club is currently drafting a questionnaire for delivery around the village.

8 Accounts/Correspondence

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash

Receipts

Sale of 11 Parish Maps
Allotment hire

16.50
3.50
20.00

Payments

D. Chandler – 2 hours litterpick
Boardmans – photocopying charges
Mercury newspaper

8.48
1.77
5.36
15.61

Cheques required

SLCC
Chas Lowe
Jeff Skidmore
PKF
J. Allsop
Don Chandler

Annual membership premium
50 x 25kg rock salt
To fill salt bins with rock salt
Audit fee for year ended 31.03.00
February salary
Phone calls
8 hours litterpick

447.80
23.18

48.00
192.11
35.25
394.09
470.98
33.92
1174.35

Cheques received

None

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash

Receipts

Floodlighting to 17/01/01	20.00
Floodlighting to 10/02/01	83.00
Mrs. Robey – Pavilion hire	<u>14.00</u>
	<u>117.00</u>

Payments

D. Chandler – 1 hour	4.24
C. Bewley – 16 hours	80.00
D. Chandler – 5 hours	<u>21.20</u>
	<u>105.44</u>

Cheques required

EHDC	Rates	83.00
Eastern Energy	Supply to 28.01.01	148.02
David Bunyan	Re-fix hand-dryer to wall of external toilet	85.78
Mrs. C. Bewley	16 hours work	<u>80.00</u>
		<u>396.80</u>

Cheques received

Buntingford & District		
Mechanical Restoration Assoc.	Hire of Parish Council room	56.70
Mrs. Gilbey	Hire of Main Hall	<u>55.00</u>
		<u>111.70</u>

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

9 Chairman's / Clerk's Report

Mr. Stock reported on the following items.

• **Hertfordshire Constabulary meeting**

Mr. Stock read out an invitation from the Hertfordshire Constabulary to attend a presentation on local flooding. This will be held on Wednesday 7th March 2001 at 7.30pm at Hertford Police Station.

No Parish Councillors are able to attend this meeting.

The Clerk to write accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

• **Use of Community Hall & field for Community Church Service on 2nd July at 10.30**

Mr. Stock read out a letter (dated 18th February) from Rodney Ranzetta, of the Churches Serving Watton, requesting the use of the Pavilion facilities and sportsfield for the Community Service on Sunday 1st July 2001 at 10.30 a.m.

Mr. Stock proposed that the facilities be made available for the Community Service, free of charge (as in the past). Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

A letter to be sent to Rodney Ranzetta accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

The Clerk to contact the Football and Cricket clubs accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

• **EHDC – Leisure guide**

Mr. Stock said that EHDC had requested information for the next edition of the Leisure Guide for May to August 2001. The Parish Council has no information for inclusion in the Leisure Guide.

• **Funding for Play equipment**

Mrs. Davies had identified an item during its circulation, which informed us that funding is available for new play equipment. Mrs. Davies said that she would find out more about this funding and the Clerk agreed to draft a letter.

However, this item has not been seen since the meeting, and the Clerk will try and obtain a copy of the literature.

Action: J. Allsop

Note: The Clerk spoke to Mr. Poulton on this matter, who informed her that EHDC has funding for up to 50% of the cost of play equipment (the other 50% to be provided by the applicant).

• **The meeting closed at 10.00 pm.**

- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 21st March 2001.**