

## Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2003 at 7.35 pm\*

Present:	Mr. N. Poulton (Chairman)	Mr. D. Stock (Vice-Chairman)
	Mr. C. Clark	Mrs. S. Davies
	Mrs. C. Dinnin	Mr. V. Dunhill
	Mr. D. Filer	Mr. I. Knight
	Mrs. H. McCash	Mr. J. Meischke
Public:	Mr. E. Riddle	

Before the start of the meeting, Mr. Poulton welcomed PC Ivens to report on police matters in the village.

\*Therefore the formal council-meeting was delayed until 7.35 pm.

### Report on update on policing matters by P.C. John Ivens

PC Ivens last updated the Parish Council on policing matters during its meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2002.

The crime figures for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2003 to 12<sup>th</sup> March 2003 show that 29 incidents of crimes took place (an average of three per week) in the Watton-at-Stone area (this includes Whempstead, the A602 from Heath Mount School to Hooks Cross, including the Three Horse Shoes public house). This is an increase of three incidents of crime over the same period last year. These incidents include:

- 10 thefts from vehicles (including at the Three Horse Shoes public house)
- 2 burglaries from dwellings
- 8 incidents of criminal damage.

The remaining incidents were related to members of the public reporting crimes and drink driving etc.

PC Ivens said that he was very disappointed about the damage to the Memorial Hall over the Christmas period. He was pleased that an initial arrest had been made, although a conviction may be difficult.

Parish Councillors asked PC Ivens if he could do anything about the problems of young BMX bikers in the village. They are a particular hazard (to themselves and to others) as they come off the sloping grass-verge onto Station Road at high speed. Evidence of this can be seen by the worn areas of grass. The riders are also causing problems in other areas of the village. None of them appear to be using lights at night, which is also a major hazard when they dart out into the road from nowhere.

Parish Councillors also asked PC Ivens to support their request that Hertfordshire Highways make the Mill Lane junction with the A602 a left-turn only. Ms. Val Weaver (Assistant District Manager, Hertfordshire Highways) had informed Mr. Clark that the police did not highlight the problem of a right-turn and that there were no problems with the road surface. It was agreed by all that the issue is one of a dangerous exit. PC Ivens agreed to support our request.

PC Ivens agreed to:

- a) talk to the boys who ride BMX bikes around the village and their parents
- b) contact Ms. Weaver in support of the Mill Lane junction with the A602 being a left-turn only.

PC Ivens left.

### 1 Apologies for absence

None.

### 2 Declaration of Interests

Although she is not covered by the code of conduct, the Clerk declared an interest in item 7 a i, Planning Application - 9 Beane Road, First-floor extension. The Clerk lives at 9 Beane Road and is a joint applicant with her husband.

The Clerk will therefore leave the meeting when the item is discussed.

### 3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

None.

## 4 Minutes of the last meeting

### a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2003**  
Mrs. McCash proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.  
Mrs. Davies seconded the motion and all present at that meeting were in favour.

### b) Review of actions

- **Discuss, during allotments site-meeting, trees at 122 High Street that are obscuring the entrance**  
This item was not discussed during the allotment site meeting. However, Mr. Poulton had instructed Ted Brown to trim back the branches of these trees.

- **Discuss, during on-site meeting, how to display the byelaws on-site at Watton Green and the Lammas**

Mr. Stock said that he and Mr. Meischke had agreed where the notice boards are to be sited.

Mr. Stock had also agreed the wording for both notice boards with Mr. Meischke. Mr. Meischke has obtained a verbal quotation from N. G. Signs of £50 + VAT for each sign. After agreement between Mr. Stock, Mr. Meischke, Mr. Filer and Mr. Poulton, N. G. Signs were instructed to do the work.

Mrs. Dinnin proposed that the Parish Council now authorises Mr. Stock and Mr. Meischke to do what is necessary to complete the notice boards and have them installed on Watton Green and the Lammas.

Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

This item to remain on the agenda under Environment Sub-Committee.

**Agenda: Env**

- **Write to Planning department re two planning applications at Blue Hill Farm, High Elms Lane**

This action point has been completed.

- **Contact Danny Kyan, at Hertfordshire Highways, re traffic calming at Whempstead**

Mr. Clark is very dissatisfied with the lack of response from Hertfordshire Highways. He said that when he finally managed to speak to Ms. Val Weaver (Assistant District Manager, Hertfordshire Highways) concerning the traffic-calming issues in Whempstead, all she could suggest was a traffic count to ascertain the amount of traffic flowing through Whempstead. However, those responsible for carrying-out the procedure are months behind with their existing work schedules.

Mr. Clark said that he had also copied PC Dave Firman (Hertfordshire Constabulary) with his letter concerning the traffic problems in Whempstead. However, Ms. Weaver has informed him that PC Firman no longer works for the Hertfordshire Constabulary.

Mr. Clark was also informed that our request that the Mill Lane junction with the A602 be made left turn only is not being considered because the police investigation into the motorcycle accident did not suggest a problem with the junction.

It was agreed that Mr. Clark pursue this item direct with Danny Kyan (Hertfordshire Highways). If he is unable to obtain a satisfactory outcome, Mr. Poulton said that he would speak with Danny Kyan himself.

**Action: C. Clark**

All Parish Councillors fully agreed that this subject must be pursued. This item to remain on the agenda.

See also action from PC Ivens on page 1 of these minutes.

- **Write to EHDC re 117-121 High Street – illuminated fascia sign**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 8 f, EHDC - 117-121 High Street – illuminated fascia sign (on page 9 of these minutes).

- **Write again to Hertfordshire Highways re flooding of Walkern Road**

This action point has been completed.

Mrs. Dinnin said that she wrote again on 4<sup>th</sup> March, however a response had not yet been received.

Mrs. Dinnin to chase.

**Action: C. Dinnin**

- **Write to Danny Kyan re resurfacing of Hazeldell footpaths as a high priority**

This action point has been completed.

- **Pay Lubbock Fine audit fee**

This action point has been completed.

- **Seek the approval of Lubbock Fine before appointing McCash and Hay as our internal auditor**

This action point has been completed.

Although, this item is also on the agenda under 8 d, Lubbock Fine – Internal Audit (on page 9 of these minutes), it was discussed under 6 a, Budget & Finance Sub-Committee (on page 5 of these minutes).

- **Write to Mr. Welch re his quotation for grass cutting works in the village**

This action point has been completed.

Mr. Meischke has subsequently met with Mr. Welch to discuss the schedule for the grass cutting works. Mr. Welch has produced his public liability insurance document (a copy of which is to be placed in the Parish Council's files).

- **Put a notice in the Parish News inviting bids for the leaf blower and the petrol-driven mower**

This item was discussed under 6 a, Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee - Parish-Council-owned mower and leaf blower (on page 6 of these minutes).

- **Report on site-meeting at Allotments**

This item was discussed under 6 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Allotments (on pages 6 and 7 of these minutes).

- **Ask Ted Brown to prune the shrubs in the Community Hall garden**

This action point has been completed and the work has been done.

- **Inspect damaged bin on Great Innings Estate and if required, purchase a new one**

Mr. Poulton said that he wrote to Stort Valley Housing Association on 5<sup>th</sup> March to inform them that the litterbin by flats numbers 12 to 16 and house number 18 had been destroyed by fire and needed to be replaced as soon as possible to avoid a litter problem in the area.

It was agreed that we wait for a response from Stort Valley Housing Association before any further action is taken.

Mr. Poulton said that the Conservation Society had written to us concerning this litterbin. It was agreed to write and inform the Conservation Society of the situation. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Inspect dam on Lammas drainage ditch during site meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> February**

The dam on the Lammas drainage ditch has been removed.

- **Write to Planning department re 6 Rivershill**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to Planning department re 2 Perrywood Lane**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to planning Inspectorate re Agricultural Barn, Whempstead Road, Whempstead**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to planning Inspectorate re Dwelling house, Whempstead Road, Whempstead**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to planning Inspectorate re Erection of two houses and detached garages Perrywood Lane**

This action point has been completed.

- **Attend Hertfordshire Constabulary launch of Hertfordshire's policing plan 2003/2004**

Mr. Filer confirmed that he would attend the launch on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2003. **Action: D. Filer**

Mr. Filer to give his report on the launch during the April 2003 meeting. **Action: 03/03**

- **Inform Hertfordshire Highways of damage to crash barrier at the bottom of Station Road**

This action point has been completed.

The barrier has not yet been repaired but has been wrapped in red and white tape to indicate a problem.

- **Write to HCC re application for adding a bridleway in the Parish of Aston to the definitive map**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 8 e, HCC re application for a modification order to add a bridleway in the Parish of Aston to the Definitive Map (on page 9 of these minutes).

- **Attend Walkern Parish Council – 2003 Inter Parish Conference**

Mrs. Dinnin, Mr. Poulton and Mr. Stock attended the 2003 Inter Parish Conference on 19<sup>th</sup> February.

Mrs. Dinnin said that although Walkern Parish Council were excellent hosts, there was nothing relevant to report to the Parish Council on the topics discussed during the evening, however, various item had been put on circulation.

- **Attend Braughing Parish Council – Parishes for Rural Environmental Protection (PREP) meeting**

Mr. Filer reported that he had attended the meeting at Braughing on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2003. Although the invitation letter had stressed the environmental impact of potential development at Stansted Airport, it was explained that the meeting was not all about Stansted but about environmental issues affecting East Hertfordshire as well.

After a short presentation from the Honorary Directors of CPRE – Herts, a good presentation was given by Richard Brown from HCC. He explained about areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONBs) and reported that in the period 1956 – 1995 twelve National Parks had been proposed with eleven already designated and fifty two conservation areas proposed of which forty one had been designated as AONBs.

He explained the difficulty of designating an area as an AONB and thought it unlikely that such a designation would be achieved in Hertfordshire.

Mr. Filer had stated that one of the greatest threats to the environment was perceived to be the expansion of Stansted Airport. He pointed out that (unlike in the past when people had their holidays in the UK) there was now a huge demand for holidays abroad and that with this came a need to provide more air transport. It was no use adopting a NIMBY (not in my back yard) approach and perhaps we should support one new runway at Stansted and an improvement to the infrastructure in the region. Mr. Filer reported that although he had some support, his views were not popular at the meeting.

He went on to say that a draft constitution for PREP had been issued at the meeting and local parishes were being encouraged to join.

As it is very much an attempt to get local parishes to influence environmental issues together, he recommended that whilst not necessarily accepting all the items in the draft constitution, we should join PREP. He pointed out that with his rather unpopular views of expansion at Stansted Airport he would not be the appropriate Parish Council representative.

It was agreed that Mr. Stock, as Chairman of the Environment Sub-Committee, would progress this matter on behalf of the Parish Council and try to attend the next meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2003. **Action: D. Stock**

- **Contact Mr. Summan re siting the Parish Council notice board on the side-wall of the Post Office**

Mr. Summan does not agree to the Parish Council notice board being sited on the sidewall of the Post Office. However, he has agreed to us siting our notice board, together with the one belonging to the Church, on an independent framework on posts against the wooden fencing panels near the entrance to his shop.

Mr. Whitehead has constructed the framework on-site and erected the Parish Council notice board on it at a total cost of £50 plus VAT. The church will be giving the Parish Council a donation of £25 towards the cost.

- **Complete and return police questionnaire**

This action point has been completed.

- **Put on circulation CPRE – 2003 Hertfordshire’s Village of the Year competition application forms**

This action point has been completed.

- **Investigate further the implications of the school transport issues for Watton students**

Mrs. Davies said that she had investigated further the proposals outlined in the ‘Home to School Transport policy’ and confirmed that from autumn 2003, any child from Watton-at-Stone who gains admission to a school other than Sele School will be liable to pay the transport costs. Whereas any child going to Sele School would have their transport costs paid for (up to the leaving-age of sixteen).

However, children who gain admission to a school other than Sele who already have a sibling in that school will receive free transport.

Currently, the transport charges to school are £158 per term, but are due increase in September 2003.

There are exceptions, and those claiming benefit may qualify for free transport. There is also the possibility of qualifying for ‘assisted transport’, if there are spare seats on school vehicles (but this will apply to very few cases).

Mrs. Davies expressed her fears that if this goes unchallenged, our whole community is in danger of dying, as families will be forced to move out of the village to places where they can exercise parental choice. Children are the future of the village and families bring a balance to the community. Without them, Watton-at-Stone would become a soulless dormitory for commuters.

There is a strong feeling amongst Parish Councillors that the ‘Home to School Transport policy’ is unfair and discriminatory, and must be addressed.

After discussion, it was agreed to write to Oliver Heald MP and County Councillor Bryan Hammond asking for their help. It was agreed also to write Mrs. Mannell (Head Teacher at Watton Primary School) asking her to ensure that all of their Year 6 parents are made aware of the changes in the ‘Home to School Transport policy’ that comes into force this September. Mrs. Mannell to be informed that we are raising our concerns with both Councillor Brian Hammond and Oliver Heald MP and strongly suggest that parents do the same and that Oliver Heald will be holding his next surgery in Watton-at-Stone on the 5<sup>th</sup> April.

Mrs. Davies to act accordingly.

**Action: S. Davies**

Mrs. Davies to write a report for the Parish News on the implications of the changes in the school transport-system for Watton students.

**Action: S. Davies**

- **Attend the last of the Crime and Disorder trainings sessions**

The Clerk was unable to attend the meeting because of a family bereavement.

- **Write articles for Parish News**

This action point has been completed.

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

- **Chase progress on repair to damaged surface near barrier on footpath leading to Church Lane**

Mrs. McCash reported that the footpath surface has now been repaired.

- **Contact Fred Burnell re moles on sportsfield**

This action point has been completed.

The Clerk to contact Fred Burnell to find out if the work has been done.

**Action: J. Allsop**

## 5 Specific Items

**a) Traffic-claiming in Whempstead**

This item was discussed under 4 b, Review of Actions - Contact Danny Kyan, at Hertfordshire Highways, re traffic calming at Whempstead (on page 2 of these minutes).

**b) Ornate village sign**

Mrs. McCash said that no progress had been made. Mr. Mould has still not produced the designs for the ornate village sign, inspite of numerous telephone messages urging him to do so in time for this Parish Council meeting.

Mrs. McCash said that she would do all she could to obtain the designs for the Parish Council meeting to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2003.

**Action: H. McCash**

**c) Ownership of footpath adjacent to Bull Public House**

No further progress to report.

The Clerk to chase.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**d) Walkern Road – flooding**

This item was discussed under 4 b, Review of Actions - Write again to Hertfordshire Highways re flooding of Walkern Road (on page 2 of these minutes).

## 6 Reports

**a) Sub-Committees**

**Budget & Finance**

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

- **Internal Audit**

Mr. Filer read out the following letter from Lubbock Fine (dated 19<sup>th</sup> February 2003).

‘Thank you for your letter of 14<sup>th</sup> February and the enclosed cheque in settlement of my firms invoice. In response to your question about the proposed appointment of a new internal auditor, I would comment that as the husband of a councillor, Mr. McCash could not strictly hold himself to be wholly independent of the council. Clearly he is not involved in the operation of the council but he has a direct connection of one of the councillors. My conclusion is therefore that the appointment of Mr. McCash would not be in keeping with the spirit of the new requirements.’

Mr. Filer said that he had spoken to Mr. Jim Morrissey who is willing to carry-out the internal audit.

Mr. Filer asked the Clerk to clarify what an internal audit required.

**Action: J. Allsop**

Because of Lubbock Fine’s response to the internal audit for the Parish Council, it was agreed to write again to them to find out if they would be happy for McCash and Hay to continue doing the Community Hall annual accounts. Also, if they do not consider their appointment in keeping with the spirit of the new requirements, would they consider an employee of McCash and Hay’s carrying-out the audit provided they were working independently?

Mr. Filer to act accordingly.

**Action: D. Filer**

- **Insurance details for Parish Council and Community Hall**

Mr. Filer said that the Insurance details for the Parish Council and Community Hall were discussed at the Community Hall Trustees meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2003 and it was confirmed that both insurance policies cover Public Liability and Employers Liability for any employee or volunteer. The Parish Council insurance covers anyone between the ages of 15 and 75, whereas the Community Hall Trustees policy covers anyone between the ages of 12 and 80.

We have now received the annual renewal of the Community Hall policy, which is £1,783.07 for the period starting 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003. The budget figure for 2003/2004 is £1250. Mr. Filer said that he had

contacted Zurich Municipal to seek a better quotation. However, they would not give him a quotation because under our policy with Cornhill we have agreed to a reduced rate providing we stay with them for a minimum of four years (which expires next year).

Mr. Filer said that he had spoken to an independent broker and been informed that the Parish Council would not be able to better Cornhill Insurance's prices.

It was agreed that Cornhill Insurance should be paid immediately.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Anti-glare screen for computer**

The Clerk has requested an anti-glare screen for the Parish Council computer. Mr. Dunhill had obtained a catalogue from County Supplies which included a selection of anti-glare screens. Mr. Poulton proposed that the Clerk be authorized to spend up to £100 on an anti-glare screen. Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

**Action: J. Allsop**

## Community Hall Trustees

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

- **Report on meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2003**

Mr. Poulton said that he would report on this item during our meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2003.

**Action: N. Poulton**

The Clerk to distribute the minutes of the Trustees meeting as soon as they are complete.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Sports equipment storage-room in the Main Hall**

Mr. Poulton thanked Mr. Stock, Mr. Knight and a member of Mr. Meischke's staff for the work they had done in clearing out and reorganising the store-room used by hires of the Main Hall. Mr. Poulton also thanked Mr. Meischke for taking all unwanted items away for disposal.

## Recreation & Amenities

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

- **RoSPA – Playarea safety inspection**

Mr. Meischke, Mr. Poulton and Mr. Stock had a site meeting with Wicksteed Leisure to discuss the safety-surface under the piece of multi-play equipment (which fails to meet the safety inspection standards required). Wicksteed Leisure has been given a copy of the RoSPA report and have agreed to look into what can be done to rectify the problem. They have also agreed to submit a quotation to dig-out and replace all the existing safety surfaces under the swings, see-saw and spring sit-on equipment.

This item to remain on the agenda under Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee.

**Agenda: 04.03**

- **Parish-Council-owned mower and leaf blower**

Mr. Meischke said that he was waiting to hear if Adam Welch, who will do the 2003 grass cutting and strimming work, is interested in purchasing the mower and leaf blower for £150.

If Mr. Welch is not interested in purchasing the equipment, it will be offered for sale at £150 in the April edition of the Parish News.

Mr. Meischke to act accordingly.

**Action: J. Meischke**

## Environment

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

- **Allotments**

Mrs. Dinnin, Mr. Poulton, Mr. Stock, Mr. Meischke and Mr. Dunhill attended the site meeting held on the allotments on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> February. The purpose of the meeting was to review the state of the uncultivated area of the allotment site and discuss various options for improving it.

Mr. Stock said that after much discussion on-site, it was felt that because of the high (and on-going) costs involved in clearing and maintaining the uncultivated area in a clean state, we should do no more than we do at present, i.e. a periodic trim.

It was also felt that if we receive a substantial number of complaints about the state of this part of the allotment site in the future, the Parish Council could consider the possibility of helping the allotment holders to resolve the problem themselves. This could be done by giving a grant to an Allotment Holders Association (which would need to be formed) and helping them to raise additional funds from other sources, e.g. a LEAF grant, Landfill Tax Credits.

After discussion by the full Parish Council, in particular with regard to the current cost of providing the allotment site, Mr. Stock proposed that we write to all allotment holders to invite them to a meeting to discuss the possibility of setting-up an Allotment Holders Association. This first meeting would be chaired by Mr. Poulton. (Any subsequent meetings would need to be run by the allotment holders themselves.) Mr. Meischke seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

**Action: D. Stock**

- **Tree Debris**

Mr. Stock said that, due to a misunderstanding when the agenda was prepared, this subject comprised the following two items.

- **Continuing clearance of tree debris on the Lammas**

Mr. Stock had noted that Mr. Dunhill had an on-going task to clear tree debris from the Lammas and felt that this was unfair. He said that such tasks should be performed by a contractor and not be left to a single Parish Councillor to do. This was agreed by all present and Mr. Stock suggested that we should add this work to that required on other trees on the Lammas (see next item).

- **Trees on the Lammas river bank**

Mr. Stock asked Mr. Poulton to report on the outcome of the site visit on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> February. Mr. Poulton said that Mrs. Dinnin, Mr. Stock, Mr. Meischke, Mr. Dunhill and himself had walked along the river bank between Mill Lane and the start of the paddock adjacent to Walkern Road to inspect the condition of the trees in our ownership. As a result, it was noted that a number of trees needed to cut-back or removed before they became a hazard. It was agreed that Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke re-visit the site and mark the trees and parts of trees that need to be removed (including the tree debris discussed above). Contractors will then be invited to quote for the work to be done (which shall include shredding all debris on-site). **Note:** Due to availability problems, this action point will now be taken by Mr. Stock and Mr. Dunhill. **Action: D. Stock/V. Dunhill**

Mr. Stock said that we must replace any tree that is removed; this was agreed by all present.

## b) Sportsfield

### i) Report

Mr. Poulton carried-out the sportsfield report on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2003, the result of which is as follows.

- **Sportsfield:**

Condition of grass	Very lumpy.
Litter	None.
Dog fouling	Being used.
Netball posts	OK.
General	Very good.

- **Children's Playground:**

Condition of surface	Good.
Litter/Litterbin	Empty.
Large swings	OK.
Small swings	OK.
See-Saw	OK.
Rainbow multi-play and slide	OK.
Two spring sit-on	OK.
Teen shelter	OK.
General	Good overall.

- **Bike ramps area:**

Junior Jump	OK.
Double Ramp	OK.
Fun Box	OK.

- **Community Hall:**

General Condition (Exterior)	Good – mud on windows of pavilion.
Litterbin	Empty.
Car Park	Good.
General	Good.

- **Multi-Purpose Play Area:**

Surface	Bikes had been using area–small amount of chewing gum.
Boundary Fencing	OK.
Tennis nets	OK.
Litter	None.
General	Leaves need clearing from channels, instructed Ted Brown to clear.

- **Great Innings Play Area:**

Equipment	Good condition.
Surfaces	OK.
Litter	Empty.

Dog fouling	None.
Comments	Large branch broken off fir tree. I will report to EHDC.
<b>• Allotments Area:</b>	
Access	Good.
Condition of paths between Allotments	Good.
Condition of Allotments under cultivation	Good.
Condition of Allotments not under cultivation	Overgrown.
Litter	None.
Comments	Good.
<b>• Culverts on Mill Lane</b>	
Litter and rubbish in and around Culverts	None.
Dog-fouling	None.
Comments	Good.
<b>• Salt bins</b>	
Perrywood Lane	-
Entrance to Great Innings	-
Great Innings South – outside number 93	-
Station Road	Full.
Moorymead Close	Full.
Hazeldell	Full.
<b>• Dog-waste bins</b>	
Footpath 17	OK.
Sportsfield	OK.
Church Walk	OK.
Walkern Road	OK.
Station Road	OK.
High Street (by Memorial)	OK.
Great Innings	OK.
Mill Lane	OK.
<b>• General Comments</b>	
	-

- **Leaves in drainage channel around MPPA**  
Mr. Poulton said that after contacting several Parish Councillors on the subject, he instructed Ted Brown to clear the drainage channel. The work has now been completed.
- **Large branch broken off fir tree at Great Innings playarea**  
Mr. Poulton said that he had reported the damage to EHDC.

**ii) Weekly report and action**

No new problems were identified during the weekly inspections.

## 7 Planning

### a) Applications

The Clerk left the meeting while this item was discussed.

**i) 9 Beane Road**

First-floor extension

Mr. Poulton said that he visited the residents affected and they had no objections to the planning application.

Parish Councillors studied the plans and agreed to write to EHDC informing them that the Parish Council has no comment on this application. Because of the Clerk’s involvement in this application, the Chairman will sign the letter.

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

The Clerk returned to the meeting.

**ii) 1 Hazeldell**

Two-storey side extension

Mr. Stock said that he had not visited nearby residents because no one is directly affected by this application. He also said that a high-visibility notice of the application was on display for any interested party to view. The proposed extension is similar to another close by in Hazeldell.

Parish Councillors studied the plans and agreed to write to EHDC informing them that the Parish Council has no comment on this application. **Action: J. Allsop**

## b) Decisions

None

## 8 Correspondence received

### a) HCC – Rural Traffic and Transport conference

This item has been on circulation. Mrs. Davies made comments on the proposed changes to the school transport system. Refer to item 4 b, Review of Actions - Investigate further the implications of the school transport issues for Watton students (on page 4 of these minutes).

### b) EHDC – Communities against Drugs 2003/2004

This item has been on circulation. It was agreed to retain this document, as it may be useful in the future.

### c) Application to Licensing Authorities re the Bull Public House

Mr. Poulton said that we had received official notification that Gary Paul Mack and Yvonne Mack are applying for the transfer of the Justices' Licence at 'The Bull' public house, from M. D. and J. A. Stockhausen to themselves. The Licensing Sessions will hear the application on 18<sup>th</sup> March at the Hertford Magistrates Court.

### d) Lubbock Fine – Internal Audit

This item was discussed under 6 a, Budget & Finance Sub-Committee - Internal Audit (on page 5 of these minutes).

### e) HCC re application for a modification order to add a bridleway in the Parish of Aston to the Definitive Map

HCC has written thanking us for our response to the modification order and they have noted our comments.

### f) EHDC - 117-121 High Street – illuminated fascia sign

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter (dated 26<sup>th</sup> February) from EHDC.

**'Happy Garden, 117-121 High Street, Watton-at-Stone**

Thank you for your letter of 15 February 2003 in respect of the above.

I note your comments regarding the fascia 'sign' at this site and would agree that the design and materials of construction of the sign are poor. However, I should point out that the sign is not illuminated, it would not require advertisement consent. In its current illuminated form it does require consent and I have advised the owner of this. Indeed, an application for consent to retain the illuminated sign has been received by my department but is not yet complete and cannot be registered. If and when it is, you will be advised in the normal way.

I must stress that the owner of this site has not been given any indication that the Council will be prepared to grant consent for the sign. If in fact, this application is refused, and the sign continues to be illuminated I will consider further legal proceedings.

I hope this clarifies the situation, but if you have any further queries please contact me again.'

### g) Michael Stanley – Grass cutting and strimming quotation

Mr. Poulton said that Michael Stanley has submitted a quotation (dated 26<sup>th</sup> February) for the 2003 grass cutting and strimming work. However, the Parish Council had already agreed, at its meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> February, to accept Adam Welch's quotation.

### h) Watton-at-Stone Conservation Society re litter bin on Great Innings Estate

Mr. Poulton said that the Watton-at-Stone Conservation Society wrote on 24<sup>th</sup> February asking if we could site a new litterbin on Watton Green to alleviate the litter problem in the area.

They have also requested that the burnt litter-bin in Great Innings be replaced. Refer to item 4 b, Review of Actions - Inspect damaged bin on Great Innings Estate and if required, purchase a new one (on page 3 of these minutes).

It was agreed by all to site a new litterbin at Watton Green. Mr. Filer agreed to empty the bin on a regular basis. Mr. Poulton to act accordingly. **Action: N. Poulton**

**i) Watton-at-Stone Conservation Society re grass bank alongside Hazeldell Estate in Station Road**

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter from the Conservation Society (dated 24<sup>th</sup> February) to Valerie Weaver, at HCC, as follows.

**‘Grass Bank alongside Hazeldell Estate, in Station Road.**

Further to our telephone conversation, we are writing to confirm that we would like some action to prevent children on mountain bikes from riding on this bank. Not only is it very dangerous, it is destroying the grass.

Whilst it is appreciated that you have a backlog of work to implement, it would be appreciated if you could attend to this matter as soon as possible.’

This item was discussed before the start of the meeting. See Report on update on policing matters by P.C. John Ivens (on page 1 of these minutes).

**j) HCC – Temporary closure of Walkern Road, Watton-at-Stone**

HCC has written (letter dated 25<sup>th</sup> February) to advise us that the Moor Bridge over the river Beane in the Walkern Road will be closed for up to two days to allow investigations to take place. Then for a further period of up to six weeks to allow construction works to take place; sometime during the period 10<sup>th</sup> February to the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2003.

**k) EHDC – Alteration of date for two appeals by Mr. J. Skidmore re land at Whempstead Road, Whempstead**

EHDC has written to inform us that the hearing into the two appeals will now take place on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2003.

**9 Reports from other Organisations**

- **Watton-at-Stone Conservation Society**

Mr. Stock said that the Conservation Society is holding its AGM on 20<sup>th</sup> March at 8 pm in the Community Hall.

- **Watton-at-Stone Memorial Hall Management Committee**

Mrs. Dinnin said that all the repair work to the Memorial Hall was complete, following the damage caused by vandals during the Christmas period. The repairs were covered by the Memorial Hall’s insurance company.

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

Mr. Knight said that the Sports and Social Club is pursuing the drainage problem on the sportsfield and Collier Turf is providing a care and maintenance plan. Because the football pitch is so waterlogged, the Saturday football team is currently between five and six games down and the Sunday team is three games down. Mr. Knight said it was important to produce a system of maintaining the pitch so that it is improved year by year.

He also said that the Sports and Social Club has resurrected its plans for more sporting facilities (including football pitches) in Watton-at-Stone.

- **Watton-at-Stone Playgroup**

Mrs. Davies reported that HCC has renewed the lease on the Horsa Hut for another three years.

- **PPP**

Mr. Dunhill said that the Countryside Management Service has arranged a public-participation walk around Watton’s Millennium-Walk on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> March. Unfortunately, he himself is unable to take part in the walk because he is away for the weekend. Several other Parish Councillors also said that they would not be in Watton-at-Stone on 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

- **Watton-at-Stone Scout and Guide Group**

Mr. Dunhill said that Mr. Salthouse is resigning as leader of the Watton-at-Stone Scout and Guide Group because he is leaving the area. A date for an AGM has not yet been set.

**10 Items for Parish News**

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

- Traffic hazard at the Mill Lane exit on to the Watton by-pass
- Letter to Allotment holders re the forming of an Allotment Holders Association.

Mr. Filer to write the articles accordingly.

**Action: D. Filer**

**Note:** In addition to the above two items, Mrs. Davies will be writing a report about the ‘Home to School Transport policy’.

## 11 Accounts/Correspondence

### Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

#### Petty Cash

##### Receipts

Mark Stewart – Allotment rent

5.00

5.00

##### Payments

None

#### Cheques required

HCC	Lighting energy charges 1/4/02 – 30/09/02		119.85
D. R. Monk	Leaf clearance	100.00	
	6-months War Memorial maintenance	62.50	162.50
Ted Brown	16 hours litterpicking		84.00
Ted Brown	5 hours litterpicking		26.25
J. Allsop	Stamps	27.00	
	Salary	491.82	518.82
N. J. Whitehead	Put up notice boards		<u>58.75</u>
			<u>970.17</u>

#### Cheques received

None

### Watton-at-Stone Community

#### Hall

#### Petty Cash

##### Receipts

Mr. Keen – Main Hall

80.00

Barry Moor – Main Hall

24.00

John Murphy

6.00

Sarah Standage – Pavilion hire

8.00

J. Kingslake - Pavilion

21.00

Floodlighting to 05/01/03

146.00

285.00

##### Payments

VAT return 01/03

38.16

Drainage Centre – guttering

19.33

Lock Stock & Barrel -2 door pulls

6.82

Mrs. Philips – 5 weeks work

25.00

89.31

#### Cheques required

HCC

Cleaning materials

152.42

152.42

#### Cheques received

EHDC

Pavilion hire

176.00

Karen Proctor

Pavilion hire

21.00

Georgie Pay

Main Hall – refund

-72.00 \*

125.00

\* February's accounts show a payment from Georgie Pay of £189.00. This amount is made up of two cheques, one for £117 and the other for £72. Georgie cancelled one of her bookings and therefore her cheque for £72 has not been paid in.

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

- The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.
- The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2003.