

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 6th July 2005

Present:	Mr. Poulton (Chariman)	Mr. C. Clark
	Mrs. C. Dinnin	Mr. V. Dunhill
	Mr. I. Knight	Mrs. H. McCash
	Mr. M. Smith	Mr. D. Stock

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Meischke and Mr. Filer.

2 Public Participation

None.

3 Declaration of Interests

None.

4 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

Mr. Poulton wished all Parish Councillors a very happy summer break.

5 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8th June 2005**
Mr. Stock proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.
Mr. Knight seconded the motion and all present at that meeting were in favour.

b) Review of actions

- **Write to Planning Department re 14 Watton House**
This action point has been completed.
- **Send copy of letter to Planning Department to Peter Doolan at 12 Watton House**
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to Planning Department re land adjacent to 99 High Street**
This action point has been completed.
- **Send copy of letter re 99 High Street to Mr. & Mrs. Rattue (93 High Street) & residents of White House Close**
This action point has been completed.
- **Send a copy of Fire-Fighter Andy Mason's letter re access to 5 Rectory Lane to Paul Sharkey**
This action point has been completed.
- **Arrange for the two trophies to be engraved and purchase two keepsake trophies**
This action point has been completed.
Refer to item 7 c, Specific items - Awarding of the Good Citizenship trophy and the Cup for Outstanding Effort (on page xx of these minutes).
- **Write to the Alliance and Leicester if change of bank account names is not resolved**
This item was not pursued. Refer to item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee – Bank details (on page xx of these minutes).
- **Send Annual Return with all relevant documentation to Lubbock Fine by 30th June 2005**
This action point has been completed.
- **Obtain letter from Tennis Club agreeing to donate 50% of the net cost of the floodlighting bulbs**
Mr. Poulton read out the following letter (dated 24th June) from Mr. Knight in his capacity of Chairman of the Watton-at-Stone Tennis Club.
'It is confirmed that the Watton-at-Stone Tennis Club will donate 50% of the net cost of the additional bulbs (4) needed to complete the replacement of the MPPA Floodlighting bulbs before the start of winter this year.'
- **Contact Ben Cannon to do the weed wipe**
This item to be discussed under 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Weed wipe update (on page xx of these minutes).
- **Weed-kill around the teen-shelter and play area safety-surfaces**
This action point has been completed.
- **Ask Ted Brown to strim the grassed area between the MPPA and the boundary hedge with Church Walk**
This action point has been completed.

- **Ask Ted Brown to cut back the Elderberry at the base of the Oak tree**
This action point has been completed.
- **Contact Trevor Waldock (EHC) re the broken Conifer branch**
This action point has been completed.
- **Write article for Parish News**
This action point has been completed.

c) Action points outstanding for more than two months

- **Identify major expenditure items to be considered as long-term financial commitments**
Mr. Poulton said he had seen not heard from the majority of Parish Councillors and urged them to contact him as soon as possible with items they had identified. **Action: Parish Councillors**
- **Send letter of thanks to Adam Welch re his work to the Lammas**
This action point has been completed.
- **Search the internet for the best service-providers for Gas and Electricity**
This item to be discussed under 8 a, Community Hall Trustees – Best service-providers for Gas and Electricity (on page xx of these minutes).

6 Planning

a) Applications

i) Blue Hill Farm

Conversion of farm buildings to form 4 residential units (variation to planning permission 3/02/2405/FP)
Mr. Knight inspected the plans for this application and notified the neighbours affected.
He said that because planning permission had already been granted for 4 residential units and the exterior size and position of the units had not changed, he instructed the Clerk to write to the Planning Department stating that the Parish Council had no comment on this application.
Parish Councillors looked at the plans and agreed with the decision.

b) Decisions

i) Broom Hall Farm

Change of used agricultural to Class B8 storage and distribution Units -EHC permission granted

ii) Watton-at-Stone Playgroup, School Lane

Renewal of outline permission for residential development -EHC permission granted

7 Specific items

a) Youth Club

Mr. Poulton said that he attended the "Stevenage Funding Information Day" on 17th June and felt that it was largely a waste of time. The funding available is for local authority grant-aid for Stevenage Borough Council, North Herts District Council, HCC and North Herts and Stevenage PCT and does not cover villages like Watton-at-Stone.
It was agreed that the Parish Council will put this item on hold until such time as funding can be found.
This item to be removed from the Parish Council agenda.

b) Lammas Road street lighting

Mr. Poulton said that we had heard nothing further on this item from Hertfordshire Highways since the 4th May, when Val Weaver informed us that an instruction had gone to the street-lighting engineer to inspect Lammas Road re the statutory requirements regarding street lighting.
This item to remain on the agenda. **Agenda: 09/05**

c) Awarding of the Good Citizenship trophy and the Cup for Outstanding Effort

The Parish Council trophies were awarded to Damon Pook and Joanna Wood during the Community Hall service on Sunday 3rd July. Mr. Poulton said that approximately 150 people attended the service.

d) Strimming Conservation Area on the Allotments

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke attended the Allotment and Garden Association's AGM on 14th June, which was directly followed by a regular meeting of the Allotment and Garden Association.
The Allotment and Garden Association had obtained the following quotation from Mr. Presland to cut the uncultivated area of the allotments.

‘Ref. Watton Allotments

To cut down nettles with tractor topper and strim perimeter of rabbit fenced area

Total +VAT £70

This work to be done twice in the 2005 season.’

After discussion, it was agreed to write to John Love accepting the quotation and asking that Mr. Presland invoice the Parish Council direct so that the VAT element can be claimed back.

Action: J. Allsop

e) Request from Hertford Police for Parish Councillors to come out on patrol

Mr. Poulton said that following a request from Hertford Police for Parish Councillors to join them out on their patrol, he went out with Andy Woodwood today.

Mr. Poulton said that the areas they visited included Aston, Tewin and Little Berkhamstead. One incident involved a police chase across a cornfield at 40 mph. Mr. Poulton said that he would highly recommend any Parish Councillor to go out on patrol and asked interested parties to contact him directly, however he could not promise that they would experience such an exciting time as he had today.

f) Police meeting on 14th July to discuss locality policing

Mr. Filer has agreed to attend the locality policing meeting on 14th June and will report back to the Parish Council during its meeting on 14th September 2005.

Action: D. Filer

g) Risk Assessments

All Parish Councillors were given the following list of Risk Assessment checks.

Monthly checks by a Parish Councillor

- Sportsfield equipment
- Sportsfield for litter and dog fouling
- Allotment site
- Dog bins
- Great Innings play area
- Mill Lane culvert
- Salt bins

Six-Monthly Checks by two Parish Councillors

- Sportsfield equipment
- Multi Purpose Play Area
- Community Hall including first-aid box

Yearly Checks by qualified professionals

- ROSPA check on play equipment owned by the Parish Council
- Fire equipment check in Community Hall
- Electricity check in Community Hall
- Gas and boiler check in Community Hall

All checks reported and minuted at the relevant Parish Council Meetings

Mrs. McCash said that the War Memorial and Ornate Village Sign were missing from the above list.

Mr. Poulton asked Parish Councillors to give any other missed items to the Clerk so she can update the list.

Action: Parish Councillors/J. Allsop

It was agreed that a copy of the Risk Assessment checks be placed in the Parish Council folder.

Action: J. Allsop

8 Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

In the absence of Mr. Filer, Mr. Poulton reported on the following items concerning the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee.

- **Bank accounts**
The Clerk said that the problems with the names on the new Alliance and Leicester bank accounts has finally been resolved.
- **Quarterly statement of accounts for the Parish Council and Community Hall**
Mr. Poulton said that this will be presented to the Parish Council by Mr. Filer during its September meeting.

Community Hall Trustees

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

- **Report and minutes of meeting held on 5th July 2005**

All Parish Councillors were given a copy of the minutes of the Trustees meeting held on 5th July 2005.

- **Broken windows**

It was agreed that the damaged glass-panes would not be replaced until after the end of the Summer Play Scheme. The Clerk has ordered waterproofing glass-tape to protect the areas already damaged

- **Long-term maintenance issues**

Mr. Poulton is to obtain cost estimates for the long-term maintenance issues identified to date for the MPPA, Community Hall and sportsfield. **Action: N. Poulton**

Other long-term maintenance issues identified are to review the welfare safety of trees on the sportsfield, the Lammas and on Watton Green and the maintenance of seats throughout the village.

- **Best service-providers for Gas and Electricity**

Mr. Poulton to obtain the best service-providers for Gas and Electricity. **Action: N. Poulton**

- **Cricket Club Notice**

The Cricket Club has displayed the following notice in the Community Hall changing rooms.

‘NOTICE

The use of mobile phones and digital cameras is forbidden in this area

By order of the Club Committee’

The notices are required as part of the child protection act. The Parish Council agreed that because of this the notices should remain.

- **Photocopy machine**

The Clerk took a meter reading and noted that over 2000 copies had been made during the last six months. She uses the machine very little herself and could only account for approximately 500 copies during this period. After discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council removes the power cable from the machine and re-attaches it as required. The Clerk will also take meter readings on a monthly basis so as to identify any un-authorised use of the machine.

Recreation & Amenities

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

- **MPPA – general**

- **Pressure-wash and moss-kill**

Mr. Knight said that the Tennis Club players are very pleased with the excellent job that IRS did with the pressure-wash and moss-kill on the MPPA.

- **Additional tennis court**

Mr. Knight said that he had written to the St. Albans Diocesan Board to ask for permission to change the position of the new tennis court. He spoke to Tim Haggard (planning department at EHC) today and will soon be completing the relevant forms to submit a planning application to EHC.

Environment

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items concerning the Environment Sub-Committee.

- **Lammas weed-wipe update**

Mrs. Dinnin said that she contacted Sue Clarkson about the weed-wipe and she agreed that the work could be done. However, because of the time of year Mr. Cannon was instructed to patch weed-kill and not weed-wipe the affected area.

- **Tree across footpath**

Mrs. Dinnin instructed Adam Welch to remove a small tree that had fallen across the footpath.

- **Hogweed**

Mrs. McCash showed Parish Councillors an article that she had noticed in the July 1st edition of the Hertfordshire Mercury. The article states that giant hogweed contains a chemical that makes the skin sensitive to ultraviolet light, which can then result in burns. The article also states that under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it is an offence to plant or cause giant hogweed to grow in the wild. It is classed as a controlled waste and must be disposed of in a licensed, lined landfill site.

Currently there are two small patches of hogweed on the Lammas.

Mrs. Dinnin to contact both Mr. Smith and Sue Clarkson to find out how we should get rid of any giant hogweed. **Action: C. Dinnin**

b) Sportsfield

i) Report

Mr. Stock did the sportsfield report on the 4th July 2005, the result of which is as follows.

• **Sportsfield:**

Condition of grass	Good.
Litter	OK, bin next to 'Jack Turner' seat loose and slid to base of post.
Dog fouling	OK.
Netball posts	One not locked.
General	Much obscene graffiti on bench near bike ramps. Elderberry round base of Oak tree.

• **Children's Play Area:**

Condition of surface	OK.
Litter/Litterbin	OK.
Large swings	OK.
Small swings	OK.
See-Saw	OK.
Rainbow multi-play and slide	OK.
Two spring sit-on	OK.
Teen shelter	OK.
General	Some posts in hedge need attention (potential hazard).

• **Bike ramps area:**

Junior Jump	} All OK apart from obscene graffiti on one.
Double Ramp	} No sign of use.
Fun Box	}

• **Community Hall:**

General Condition (Exterior)	OK, apart from a broken window (meeting room) and surface damage to doors to external toilets. Meeting-room window panes in poor condition.
Litterbin	OK.
Car Park	OK.
General	Boiler-room overflow continues to run.

• **Multi-Purpose Play Area:**

Surface	OK, but small area of surface lifting at far end of the first court.
Boundary Fencing	OK.
Tennis nets	OK.
Litter	OK.
General	OK.

• **Great Innings Play Area:**

Equipment	OK.
Surfaces	OK.
Litter	OK.
Dog fouling	OK.
Comments	Branch stub on the tree opposite the slide is a potential hazard. Likewise on a tree between the play area and footpath to Moorymead Close.

• **Allotments Area:**

Access	OK.
Condition of paths between Allotments	OK.
Condition of Allotments under cultivation	Received complaint about the very poor state of some plots that are let but remain unworked.
Condition of Allotments not under cultivation	Very overgrown, but to be expected at this time of the year.
Litter	OK.
Comments	Barbed wire still on top of gate.

- **Culverts on Mill Lane**
Litter and rubbish in and around Culverts OK, but very overgrown.
Dog-fouling OK.
Comments No litter at all.
- **Salt bins**
Perrywood Lane OK.
Entrance to Great Innings OK.
Great Innings South – outside number 93 OK.
Station Road OK.
Moorymead Close (2) OK.
Hazeldell OK.
Footpath 17 * Salt bin at entrance to FP 17, adjacent to dog bins.
- **Dog-waste bins**
Footpath 17 OK.
Sportsfield OK.
Church Walk OK (no lid).
Walkern Road OK.
Station Road OK (no lid).
High Street (by Memorial) OK (no lid).
Great Innings OK.
Mill Lane OK, but some minor dog-fouling.
School Lane * Bin in School Lane near barriers opposite to school entrance.
- **War Memorial**
General Comments Looks good.
- **Ornate Village Sign**
General Comments Looks good.
Comment **Note:** Metal fence between Church Walk and horse’s field now removed.

- **Bench seats on sportsfield**
Mr. Poulton said that he had on several occasions tried to fix the litterbin next to ‘Jack Turner’ seat, but had failed to do so.
Mr. Poulton to inspect the graffiti on bench near bike ramps. **Action: N. Poulton**
- **Damage to MPPA surface**
Mr. Knight to inspect the small area of surface lifting at far end of the first court on the MPPA and take any necessary action. **Action: I. Knight**
- **Great Innings Play Area**
The Clerk to contact Trevor Waldock (EHC) re the branch stub on the Great Innings Play Area. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Allotments**
Mr. Stock asked the complainant to raise this issue via the Allotment and Garden Association.
Mr. Poulton said that there are several allotment-tenants that are not working their plots. He said that he is still waiting for the Allotment and Garden Association to ask him to come and visit the site.
- ii) **Weekly report and action**
Mr. Poulton said there was nothing to report from Ted Brown’s weekly inspections.

9 Correspondence received

a) Malcolm Amey, EHC re Oak tree on sportsfield

Malcolm Amey (Arboricultural Officer, EHC) wrote on 15th June acknowledging our request for permission to remove the branch of the Oak tree overhanging the MPPA.

The Clerk to chase EHC for their decision.

Action: J. Allsop

b) Hertfordshire Highways–Temporary closure of Whempstead Road, Watton-at-Stone

Hertfordshire Highways wrote on 13th June informing us that the Whempstead Road will be closed for up to 5 days sometime during the period 15th – 22nd July, when signs are in place.

c) Letter from EHC – new litterbin policy

Sara Mellor (Assistant Waste Service Manager, EHC) wrote on 10th June as follows.

‘We are proposing to make some changes to our litterbin policy to improve the standard of this service. The aim is to standardise the type of litterbins installed across the district and to co-ordinate their positioning. This letter sets out the main changes that we are proposing:

1. We will take responsibility for replacing any damaged or unsuitable litterbins on the public highway (which are in public ownership) and on East Herts Council land.
2. As bins are replaced there will be an opportunity to decide if the bin is positioned in the best place.
3. We will also be responsible for the purchase and installation of any new bins on the public highway.
4. All bins will be numbered and plotted on our computerised mapping system (Mayrise) so they can easily identified.
5. All new bins will be a standard style and colour, with ground and post mounted options.
6. We welcome proposals for new locations for bins, but these will be subject to our approval.
7. We will fund the emptying of all approved bins on the public highway.

I hope you agree that these changes should improve the operation of this service, ensuring that bins are of the right size, in the right location and are all included in our emptying programmed. Using a standard type of bin should also enhance the visual appearance of the street scene.

I will be approaching each Town and Parish Council separately over the coming months so we can consult on this new policy. In the meantime, if you are aware of any bins that need replacing urgently please let me know as soon as possible.

Also, if you haven’t already supplied this, please can you send me a list and map of all the litterbins in your area, making it clear who empties the bins. In some of the rural areas this will be the parish litterpicker. If possible, a photo of each bin would be very helpful.

Please contact me with any queries. I look forward to working with you.’

Mr. Clark said that there is a lot of litter on the Whempstead verges. Mr. Poulton said that Whempstead and the rural areas of Watton-at-Stone are not covered by litterpicking.

Sara Mellor wrote again on 16th June enclosing maps of the Watton-at-Stone area and asking the Parish Council to highlight, in colour, the roads that are litterpicked on a regular basis.

After discussion, it was agreed to respond to EHC as follows.

‘Watton at Stone Parish Council thanks you for your letter dated 10th June re East Herts District Council’s new litterbin policy.

Parish councillors discussed your proposals at their meeting and welcomed the main changes.

As requested I have pleasure in enclosing a map of Watton at Stone with the litterbins earmarked.

All the bins except one are Glasdon lockable liner trim line in black, wall and post mounted. See attached photocopy from their catalogue.

The exception is at the junction by the War Memorial at the southern end of the village and that bin is a green round Wybone bin.

The Council is not aware of any bins that need replacing urgently.

Please find enclosed a map highlighting the litterpicking areas in Watton-at-Stone. This was sent to us by Emma Tuesday.

The Parish Council, at its meeting held on 6th July, expressed concern about the amount of litter on the roadside in the areas of the parish that are not covered by litterpicking. They would like to see these areas cleared of litter on a regular basis. This includes Whempstead, which as you know is part of the parish of Watton-at-Stone.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.’

The Clerk to write accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

d) Letter from EHC – Litterpicking 2005/06

This item was discussed under item 9 c, Correspondence received - Letter from EHC – new litterbin policy (see above).

e) Email from Sara Mellor, EHC – glass collection

Mr. Poulton said that we received an email from Sara Mellor on 28th June informing us that, as from August 2005, a new glass collection service will be introduced Watton-at-Stone. Other areas to be covered by this service are Buntingford, Standon, Puckeridge and Hertford Heath. Properties on the A119 in Stapleford and Waterford, who are part of the existing paper collection route, will also be included.

The glass collection will be made once every fortnight on a Friday, at the same time as the paper collection.

f) Email from Lesley Crace re footpath stiles in the parish

Mr. Poulton said that Lesley Crace emailed him on 22nd June as follows.

‘It was with interest that I read an article in the latest issue of Hertfordshire Direct on "Summer in the Countryside" - the picture showing a walker with a dog walking across a field - and it is this article that has prompted this Email to you.

As a fairly regular walker around Watton and surrounding areas, I note that some the stiles on the footpaths have barbed wire around them. They are also not very dog friendly. I have quite often started out on a walk with the dog only to find that we have had to turn back as have been unable to get the dog under/through the stile.

On the next review of Parish footpaths would it be possible to make stiles "dog friendly". I did hear from Standon Parish Council that most of the stiles on footpaths in their area have been changed to kissing gates.

If there was no barbed wire around the stiles it would usually be possible to get a dog under some of the stiles, but obviously it is difficult because of the barbed wire and restricted access.

I am not sure how regularly footpaths in the county are checked but is there an overall body I could write to, to try and get footpaths/stiles more accessible when out walking with a dog?’

After discussion, it was agreed that Mr. Dunhill contact Lesley Crace to ask her which stiles she is referring to.

Action: V. Dunhill

g) Email from Paul Newman, EHC re licensing applications

Mr. Poulton said that Paul Newman (EHC) is notifying us by email about any applications he receives for the extension of licensing hours in the East Hertfordshire. To date, none of the public houses in Watton-at-Stone have applied for an extension.

The Clerk to copy all Parish Councillor with any emails she receives from Paul Newman that refer to Watton-at-Stone.

Action: J. Allsop

10 Reports from other Organisations

• **River Beane Restoration Association (RBRA)**

Mr. Knight reported that a meeting was held between the RBRA and Three Valleys Water to gain an update on progress with respect to resolving the low-flow problems in the River Beane.

The Environment Agency’s plan to move the Whitehall abstraction near to Hertford is shelved while more study is done on the possible effect on the River Mimram (another chalk stream with low-flow problems).

Meanwhile Three Valleys Water will investigate the possibility of reducing the abstraction at Whitehall by 50% and replacing it with up to four boreholes between Watton and Waterford. Test boreholes are planned to be in place by August 2006. Sites are to be selected and owners contacted.

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

Mr. Clark said that there was nothing to report on the Watton-at-Stone School Governors meeting held on 9th June. The Annual parents meeting will be held on 7th July.

Mr. Poulton said that he was unable to exit Rectory Lane today because two school-coaches were blocking the road. This is becoming a regular problem and the main concern is that they are stopping emergency vehicles accessing the area. It was agreed that this was a very serious concern.

Mr. Smith said that when the HCC land is developed the planners need to make sure that parking facilities are available for school coaches.

Mr. Clark agreed to speak the Watton-at-Stone School Governors to resolve the problem.

Action: C. Clark

11 Items for Parish News

None.

12 Accounts

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash

Receipts

None

Payments

Concord trophy – engraving	7.00
	<u>7.00</u>

Cheques required

Tim Clark	Clearance work on land at Rivershill	70.00
Ted Brown	S trimming work on Sportsfield	75.00
Blue Bury Farm contractors	Grass cutting and strimming on the Lammas and Watton Green	558.13
Jane Allsop	2 keep-sake trophies & engraving from Concord Trophies	31.37
St. Albans Diocesan Board	Glebe rent for allotments land	300.00
D. R. Monk	War Memorial maintenance 1 st April – 30 th June 2005	50.00
D. R. Monk	Flowerbed maintenance 1 st April – 30 th June 2005	80.00
J. Allsop	July salary	545.01
Boardman Photocopying	Charges to 30.06.05	<u>30.80</u>
		<u>1740.31</u>

Cheques received

None

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash

Receipts

Mr. Keen – Main Hall hire	80.00	Brookers - door closure for external toilet	24.09
Barry Moor – Main Hall hire	<u>12.00</u>		<u>24.09</u>
	<u>92.00</u>		

Cheques required

Stevenage Glass	Replace broken window	60.40
Kidde Fire Protection	Annual service of fire equipment	101.39
J. Phillips	Opening toilets	30.00
N. Poulton	Repair of faulty tap (work done by David Bunyan)	40.00
		<u>231.79</u>

Cheques received

C. Straker	Main Hall hire	6.00
WAS Parish Council	Half-year annual grant	2745.00
Mrs. Speller	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	48.00
Sports and Social Club	Donation for key to external cupboard	<u>14.46</u>
Mrs. Bell	Main Hall and pavilion hire	<u>46.00</u>
		<u>2859.46</u>

Mrs. McCash proposed that the Parish Council approve the above payments, Mr. Knight seconded the motion, and all present were in favour.

- The meeting closed at 2023.
- The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 14th September 2005.