

## Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2005

Present: Mr. N. Poulton (Chairman) Mr. J. Meischke (Vice-Chairman)  
 Mr. V. Dunhill Mr. D. Filer  
 Mr. I. Knight Mr. M. Smith  
 Mr. D. Stock

### 1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. Dinnin and Mrs. McCash.

### 2 Public Participation

None.

### 3 Declaration of Interests

None.

### 4 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

Mr. Poulton said that he had two additional items for discussion.

i) Planning application – Blue Hill Farm, High Elms Lane.

This item to be discussed under 7 a v, Planning applications (on page 3 of these minutes).

ii) Planning decision – Units 8 & 11, Broom Hall Farm.

This item to be discussed under 7 b iii, Planning decisions (on page 4 of these minutes).

### 5 Presentation by Sue Jarczewski on the proposed Interpretation Boards on the Lammas

Mr. Poulton welcomed Sue Jarczewski to the meeting.

Sue Jarczewski presented a draft layout of the two Interpretation Boards to be sited on the Lammas. The approximate cost of producing the boards will be £2000. The Countryside Management Service has provided a £1000 grant towards the cost.

Sue Jarczewski said that the main objective of the Interpretation Boards is to increase public awareness/enjoyment of the landscape and wildlife in the area. The boards will let the public know why the area is special, how the Parish Council is caring for it and how they themselves can get involved in its maintenance.

Parish Councillors made a number of comments on the text and agreed that they liked the overall layout of the information.

Sue Jarczewski to make the required amendments and e-mail the revised draft to the Clerk.

**Action: S. Jarczewski**

On receipt of the amended document, the Clerk to e-mail it to all Parish Councillors for their comments.

**Action: J. Allsop**

Sue Jarczewski asked the Parish Council to contact DEFRA for permission, under section 194, to erect the Interpretation Boards.

**Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Poulton thanked Sue Jarczewski for her presentation. She then left the meeting.

### 6 Minutes of the last meeting

#### a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2005**

Mr. Stock 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.

#### b) Review of actions

- **Write to Planning Department re The Moat House, Perrywood Lane**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to Mr. Goutam, Hertfordshire Highways re Lammas Road street lighting**

This item to be discussed under 8 a, Specific items - Lammas Road street lighting (on page 4 of these minutes).

- **Write to all allotment holders**

This action point has been completed.

- **Obtain quotations from current contractors for work to be done in 2006/07**  
The Clerk has contacted all current contractors, however she is still waiting for some of them to respond.
- **Re-issue the Community Hall accounts**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Increase insurance cover for play equipment items**  
Mr. Poulton said that because there is already sufficient insurance cover for the sportsfield play equipment items, this action point was not pursued.
- **Put date on estimated long-term capital expenditure document and copy to all Parish Councillors**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Purchase 4 floodlighting bulbs**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Arrange for the replacement bulbs to be fitted as soon as possible**  
Mr. Knight said that he is trying to arrange for the bulbs to be fitted as soon as possible. However, because this work is done as a favour to the Parish Council he felt that he could not press the matter.  
**Action: I. Knight**
- **Send cheque for £285 to Sports and Social Club for 50% of cost of sportsfield maintenance**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Ask Adam Welch's friend Matt to do an additional grass-cut at the beginning of October**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Arrange for Sue Clarkson to visit Watton Green and the Lammas prior to meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September**  
This item to be discussed under 9 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Grass cutting on the Lammas and Watton Green - October 2005 (on page 7 of these minutes).
- **Chase Adam Welch's friend Matt re cutting back the shrubbery at the Community Hall**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Spray the weeds around the play area**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Instruct Ted Brown to clear the weeds and mud from the bottom end of the car park**  
This action point has been completed. Mr. Poulton said that Ted has done an excellent job and had also cleared the drain in this area.
- **Instruct Ted Brown to sweep the entrance of the MPPA**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to Stort Valley Housing Association and send a copy of the letter to Mr. Harris**  
This item to be discussed under 8 b, Specific items - Report from Stort Valley Housing Association (on page 4 of these minutes).
- **Write to Danny Kyan re ownership of the hedge**  
This action point has been completed.  
Refer to item 10 d, Correspondence received - Hertfordshire Highways – re ownership of hedge (on page 10 of these minutes).
- **Arrange for photocopying machine to be serviced and obtain a spare cartridge before service-contract ends**  
The Clerk said that this action point is outstanding but will be done before the end of December 2005.  
**Action: J. Allsop**
- **Write to Hertfordshire Highways re road markings and signage for School Lane**  
Mr. Poulton said that we had received an e-mail response from Raj Goutam, a copy of which was not available at the meeting. Therefore, from memory, Mr. Poulton said that the e-mail states that at present there is sufficient signage in School Lane. However, the existing 'Keep Clear' and 'Give Way' lining has faded and will be placed on the Hertfordshire Highways list of works for lining in the future.  
The Clerk to forward Raj Goutam's e-mail to all Parish Councillors.  
**Action: J. Allsop**
- **Investigate the cost of installing solar panels and if there are any grants available towards the cost**  
This item to be discussed under 9 a, Community Hall Trustees - Verbal report on meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2005 (on page 5 of these minutes).
- **Write article for Parish News**  
Mr. Filer arranged for his article to be sent to the Parish News editors as normal. However, due to a human error, the article was not included in the October edition of the Parish News. Mr. Filer has received an apology for the error.

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

- **Speak to the Wotton-at-Stone School Governors re school coaches blocking Rectory**

It was agreed to write to Mr. Clark, in his capacity as a Wotton-at-Stone School Governor, for a response to the above item. **Action: J. Allsop**

## 7 Planning

### a) Applications

#### i) 31 Hazeldell

Conversion of garage to study and utility room

Mr. Stock said that because the application was in keeping with similar alterations to other properties in the area, he had instructed the Clerk to write to the planning department stating that the Parish Council had no comment on this application. He said that the plans for this particular conversion were tastefully done

Parish Councillors studied the plans and agreed with the decision.

#### ii) 14 Watton House

Two-storey extension to front, single-storey extension to rear and loft conversion

Mr. Dunhill visited the neighbouring residents and showed them the plans for this application.

Mr. Poulton then read copies of letters of objection sent to the planning department by Peter Doolan (12 Watton House) and Janet Goldsmith (15 Watton House).

Parish Councillors studied the plans and after lengthy discussion agreed to write to the planning department informing them that the Parish Council wishes to object to the application because the proposed extension:

- is not in keeping with the style of the surrounding houses/development
- is an overdevelopment of the site.

The Clerk to act accordingly and send copies to Peter Doolan and Janet Goldsmith. **Action: J. Allsop**

#### iii) 8 Lammas Road

Ground floor rear extension

Mr. Knight visited the residents at 9 Lammas Road and they had no objections to the application. He was unsuccessful in making contact with the residents at 7 Lammas Road.

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

#### iv) 89 Great Innings North

Two-storey side extension

Mrs. McCash has the plans for this application and therefore it could not be discussed because she was not present at the meeting.

The Clerk to contact Mrs. McCash about this application and then e-mail all Parish Councillors with her comments. **Action: J. Allsop**

#### v) Blue Hill Farm, High Elms Lane

Erection of new house and garage

Mr. Knight said that he made the plans for this application available to the neighbouring residents.

Mr. Knight then read copies of letters of objection sent to the planning department by Mrs. M. Stanley and Mr. & Mrs. I. Vosper, of numbers 1 and 4 Blue Hill Farm Cottages, respectively.

Parish Councillors studied the plans and after lengthy discussion agreed to write to the planning department informing them that the Parish Council is concerned about the following issues.

- The proposed building appears to be larger than the original footprint.
- The inclusion of balconies was refused in other applications at Blue Hill Farm and therefore should not be approved (or included) in this application because it would be inconsistent with decisions previously taken on the adjacent neighbouring properties. Also, the inclusion of balconies would not be in keeping with the style of the adjacent properties.
- The garage plans show that there is potential for a dwelling in that there is an upstairs room with skylights in the roof space. The building could easily be converted into a two-storey dwelling in the future.
- The foul-drainage system should comply with the standards set down by the local authority and the water board.

- We understand that there is asbestos in the barn that requires demolishing. We trust that the asbestos will be handled and disposed of in accordance with current health and safety standards.

The Clerk to act accordingly and send copies to Mrs. M. Stanley and Mr. and Mrs. I. Vosper.

**Action: J. Allsop**

## b) Decisions

### i) 89 Great Innings North

Two storey side extension -East Herts Council permission refused

### ii) 42 Rivershill

New dormer window to rear elevation -East Herts Council permission granted

### iii) Units 8 & 11, Broom Hall Farm

Change of use from class B8 to class B2 -East Herts Council permission granted

## 8 Specific items

### a) Lammas Road street lighting

Mr. Poulton said that the Street-Lighting Engineer had visited Lammas Road and Raj Goutam (Hertfordshire Highways) had e-mailed his report, to us. It states that the lighting is very poor. The existing street lights have spacings of 103 metres. To bring it up to a reasonable level, it would necessitate four additional columns and changing the luminaries on the existing units. A budgetary estimate is approximately £3800.

The street lights in Lammas Road are classified as footway lights and belong to the Parish Council. They are maintained by HCC who recharge the costs to the Parish Council. They were never adopted by HCC because the installation did not meet the standard in 1974 when the County Council then became Highway/Lighting authority. At present the lighting does not meet current standards and any change will require consultation with the residents, Parish Council, etc. If the street is re-lit to current standards, the effect could be startling. The cost for the provision of any additional lamp columns within Lammas Road will have to be met by the Parish Council.

Mr. Poulton asked Mr. Goutam two questions.

- Is there any chance of any financial help from County?
- If the lights were installed and the luminaries changed would County then accept responsibility for the Lammas Road lights? If so what revenue savings would the Parish Council make?

Mr. Goutam said that no funding is available in Hertfordshire Highways. However, if the Lammas Road street lighting is upgraded and HCC adopt it, the approximate annual saving on the two existing lighting columns would be £100 per annum. Funding may be available from the Hertfordshire Highways' discretionary budget.

Mr. Poulton agreed to contact Danny Kyan (Hertfordshire Highways) to apply for financial help.

**Action: N. Poulton**

Mr. Poulton to arrange a site meeting at Lammas Road so that Raj Goutam can explain to Parish Councillors in more detail what needs to be done.

**Action: N. Poulton**

It was agreed to write to Mrs. Wynes (who originally complained about the poor lighting) to inform her that Hertfordshire Highways has confirmed that the lighting in Lammas Road needs upgrading and that the Parish Council will determine how much money it can put in its budget for 2006/07 and try to identify other sources where grants towards the cost may be obtained.

**Action: J. Allsop**

### b) Report from Stort Valley Housing Association

Mr. Poulton said that he was in contact with Jules Bickers regarding our complaint about the lack of response to our letter concerning the poor state of the Stort Valley Housing Association managed-land at the rear of the Grey House (High Street). Mr. Bickers has promised to replace the fence and clean the area adjacent to the rubbish bins. These jobs have now been done. There were concerns regarding cars and rubbish left in the car park. Stort Valley Housing Association would be writing to the tenants informing them that this was in breach of their tenancy agreement and would the tenant responsible remove this rubbish.

Mr. Bickers apologised for not responding to our letter but thought that he had done so. Mr. Poulton reminded Mr. Bickers that the Parish Council is a front-line organisation as he should respond to it at all times.

### c) Update on Allotment rents

Mr. Poulton said that we had received allotment rents (totalling £312) from 20 of the allotment holders. A further £114 rent is due from the remaining 10 allotment holders.

Mr. Poulton said that only one of the three allotment holders who are not cultivating their allotments has contacted us. That allotment holder wrote to tell us that he will be giving up his allotment for health reasons.

The allotment involved has now been allocated to a new tenant.

It was agreed to write to all those allotment holders who have not paid their rent by 20<sup>th</sup> October to remind them that, in accordance with the terms of their agreement with us, their tenancy may be terminated if they do not pay their rent within 40 days of being invoiced.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**d) Motor cycle and 4-wheel drive off -roading**

Mr. Filer said that he had received a verbal complaint from Mr. Borlase (Perrywood Farm) about motor cycles and other motor vehicles off-roading in his area.

It was agreed to report the matter to PC Andy Woodward and send a copy of our letter to Tom Goldsmith (the Rights of Way Officer at HCC) and to Mr. Borlase.

**Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Dunhill said that it may be possible for the Rights of Way department to change the designation of the farm roads from 'vehicle use' to 'footpaths'.

**9 Reports**

**a) Sub-Committees**

**Budget & Finance**

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

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

Mr. Filer went through the expenditure and income items for both the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts. He explained the variations in the statements, e.g. under Parish Council income, the total precept for the year has now been received, and under Community Hall income, floodlighting receipts are low because we are only just coming into the darker months of the year( when the floodlighting income is at its greatest). He also explained that expenditure items such as grass cutting are above 50% because it is seasonal work which will not occur during the winter months.

Mr. Knight said that the pressure-wash and moss-kill expenditure was budgeted for the financial year 2004/05, however due to wet weather it was not done until this financial year (2005/06).

- **Date for reviewing budget for 2006/07**

The Budget and Finance Sub-committee will meet on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November at 1915 to discuss the 2006/07 budget.

The Clerk to inform Parish Councillors not at the meeting of this date.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**Community Hall Trustees**

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

- **Verbal report on meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2005**

- **Update on New Tennis Courts**

Mr. Knight said that progress on this is slow.

Jim Smith, a parent of one of the tennis players, has agreed to prepare the final plans (at no cost) for submission to the East Herts Council planning department.

- **Management of Keys**

Because we now have many different people and clubs hiring the Community Hall facilities, the Community Hall Trustees have prepared a formal policy with regard to the issue and management of the appropriate keys.

- **Cutting Sportsfield Hedge**

This item has been delayed because Nick Whitehead had been unavailable for personal reasons. Mr. Poulton has been informed that the hedge will be cut before the end of October.

- **Electricity and Gas Inspection**

Keith Burgess did the annual electrical-inspection on 10<sup>th</sup> October.

Mr. Meischke to contact Turners to ask them to do the annual gas-inspection.

**Action: J. Meischke**

- **Solar Panels**

Mr. Poulton said that he had investigated the possibility of installing solar panels on the roof of the Community Hall. However, because we use gas for heating the building (and solar energy is electric) we would gain no real benefit. Even if we converted the showers to solar energy, the usage is such that when all the showers are in use the solar supply would run out within about 15 minutes.

Solar energy is most beneficial to homeowners who use the same amount of electricity daily.

Also, the cost of installation is large and we would need to take out a loan to pay for it.

The Parish Council agreed not to pursue installing solar heating at the Community Hall.

- **Charging Structure**

- **2006/07 Hourly rates**

The Community Hall Trustees' recommendation is that the hire charges remain unchanged.

This was agreed by the Parish Council.

Mr. Meischke to arrange for the Community Hall to be advertised in the new 'Our Village' magazine.

**Action: J. Meischke**

- **Sports & Social Club hire-charge**

The Budget and Finance Sub-Committee will discuss the annual increase of the Sports & Social Club hire-charge during its next meeting.

**Action: B and F**

- **Byelaw sign**

The byelaw sign has been knocked over again. It was agreed that a new sign be made and installed directly on the wall of the Community Hall, i.e. on the car-park side adjacent to the external shed.

Mr. Meischke to obtain prices for both metal and plastic replacement byelaw signs.

**Action: J. Meischke**

- **Boot scrapers**

Mr. Knight said that the boot-scraper brushes need replacing. The cost is £48 per set and he proposed that we purchase 4 sets at a total cost of £217 including £25 carriage.

**Note:** The Parish Council did not approve the purchase of the four sets of replacement boot-scraper brushes during the meeting. However, directly after the meeting, Mr. Poulton, Mr. Meischke, Mr. Knight, Mr. Filer and Mr. Dunhill agreed the purchase.

The Clerk to purchase replacement the boot-scraper brushes.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Expenditure for Financial Year 2006/2007**

The Budget and Finance Sub-Committee to include the following items in the 2006/07 budget.

- **Boot scrapers**

A provision of £250 for the purchase of a larger boot scraper. Also, an annual budget provision of £217 for replacing the brushes on a twice year basis.

**Action: B & F**

- **MPPA – Moss kill and pressure wash**

A provision of £900 for MPPA maintenance, including the Moss kill and pressure-wash treatment.

**Action: B & F**

- **Bench seat on sportsfield**

A provision of £250 for the purchase of a bench seat to be sited between the small swings and the spring sit-on equipment.

**Action: B & F**

- **Guttering**

Mr. Meischke to obtain two quotations for replacing the current plastic guttering with vandal-proof guttering.

**Action: J. Meischke**

- **Acoustic**

Mr. Poulton to look at the feasibility and costing of installing acoustic panels in the sports hall and pavilion area.

**Action: N. Poulton**

Mr. Filer asked Parish Councillors to inform him of any items they would like included in the 2006/07 budget.

**Action: Parish Councillors**

- **Insurance claim**

Mr. Poulton was pleased to report that Allianz Cornhill had agreed to our insurance claim for the broken windows in the Parish Council meeting room.

A copy of the Stevenage Glass invoice has been sent to Allianz Cornhill so that they can settle our claim.

## Recreation & Amenities

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

- **Sportsfield**

- **Boot scrapers**

This item was discussed under Community Hall Trustees – verbal report on meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2005 (on page 6 of these minutes).

- **Additional Tennis Court**

This item was discussed under Community Hall Trustees – verbal report on meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2005 (on page 5 of these minutes).

**Environment**

In the absence of Mrs. Dinnin, Mr. Poulton reported on the following items concerning the Environment Sub-Committee.

• **Grass cutting on the Lammas and Watton Green - October 2005**

Sue Jarczewski, Mr. Poulton, Mrs. Dinnin and Mr. Dunhill inspected the grass at Watton Green. They agreed that the grass would need inspecting again with a view to cutting it at the end of October. An area of scrub under the tress on the far left-hand side of Watton Green needs to be cut back. Mr. Stock said that it is very important that we continue to pay particular attention to this side of Watton Green because it was the main area of encroachment.

Mr. Poulton said that he and Mrs. Dinnin had inspected Watton Green and the Lammas this week and confirmed that the grass needed cutting.

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Smith to inspect both sites again to see if a flail cut is sufficient or if the grass needs removing from one or both sites. **Action: N. Poulton/M. Smith**

• **P3 work program**

Mr. Dunhill asked Parish Councillors to identify any work that could be done under the Parish Paths Partnership (P3) programme for next year. Most of the funding will go towards the usual bridleway/footpath grass cutting maintenance work. **Action: Parish Councillors**

**b) Sportsfield**

**i) Report**

Mr. Filer did the sportsfield report on the 11<sup>th</sup> October 2005, the result of which is as follows.

• **Sportsfield:**

Condition of grass	Quite good, bushes now pruned.
Litter	None.
Dog fouling	Fairly full.
Netball posts	Rusty and unusable.
General	OK, but mud scraper needs replacing.

• **Children’s Play Area:**

Condition of surface	Good.
Litter/Litterbin	Empty.
Large swings	OK.
Small swings	OK.
See-Saw	OK.
Rainbow multi-play and slide	Good condition.
Two spring sit-on	OK.
Teen shelter	OK.
General	Church Walk needs hedge cutting (about 1/8 done).

• **Bike ramps area:**

Junior Jump	}
Double Ramp	} Clean, don’t look used.
Fun Box	}

• **Community Hall:**

General Condition (Exterior)	OK.
Litterbin	Empty.
Car Park	OK.
General	OK, but food thrown at window (car park side).

• **Multi-Purpose Play Area:**

Surface	Good.
Boundary Fencing	Very good.
Tennis nets	Good condition.
Litter	None - apart from leaves.
General	OK – but grass and weeds need strimming.

• **Great Innings Play Area:**

Equipment	OK.
Surfaces	Slide surface damaged at bottom of slide (near support).
Litter	None – bin 1/4 full.
Dog fouling	None.
Comments	Grass recently cut.

• **Allotments Area:**

Access	OK.
Condition of paths between Allotments	Not bad.
Condition of Allotments under cultivation	Good.
Condition of Allotments not under cultivation	Overgrown.
Litter	Very little.
Comments	Rubbish in one corner. Possible rat problem but no real fly-tipping.

• **Culverts on Mill Lane**

Litter and rubbish in and around Culverts	One item of rubbish.
Dog-fouling	None.
Comments	OK.

• **Salt bins**

Perrywood Lane	OK – bank needs strimming.
Entrance to Great Innings	OK.
Great Innings South – outside number 93	OK.
Station Road	OK.
Moorymead Close (2)	OK.
Hazeldell	OK.
Footpath 17	OK.
Comments	All full – no rubbish.

• **Dog-waste bins**

Footpath 17	OK.
Sportsfield	Fairly full.
Church Walk	Full and smelly.
Walkern Road	OK.
Station Road	OK.
High Street (by Memorial)	OK.
Great Innings	OK.
Mill Lane	OK.
Opposite 5 School Lane	OK.

• **War Memorial**

General Comments	Clean and tidy.
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• **Ornate Village Sign**

General Comments	OK.
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• **Boot scraper**

This item was discussed under 9 a, Community Hall Trustees - Verbal report on meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> October (on page 6 of these minutes).

• **Church Walk hedge**

This item was discussed under 9 a, Community Hall Trustees - Verbal report on meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2005 (on page 5 of these minutes).

• **Community Hall window cleaning**

The Clerk said that the windows will be cleaned tomorrow.

• **Strimming around sportsfield and MPPA**

Mr. Poulton said that Ted Brown will be doing this work during next week.

• **Damage to Great Innings play area slide**

Trevor Waldock (East Herts Council) to be e-mailed about the damage.

**Action: J. Allsop**

• **Rubbish on Allotments**

Mr. Smith said that he flattened the rubbish pile on the allotments and it was not as large as originally thought. He said that most of the mound was piled-up earth, which he has spread over the disused part of the allotments. He noted that there were some non-compostable items on the allotments (such as rusting wheelbarrows) which had obviously been left by allotment holders.

• **Grass bank behind near salt bin on Perrywood Lane**

It was agreed to e-mail Raj Goutam (Hertfordshire Highways) asking that the grass be cut.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Dog-waste bins**  
Mr. Filer said that he saw a man wearing a yellow coat was emptying bins. Mr. Poulton confirmed that the man would have been emptying the dog-waste bins.
  - **MPPA kicker-boards**  
Mr. Knight said that some of the MPPA kicker-boards are loose. He agreed to inspect them further and arrange for them to be fixed. **Action: I. Knight**
- iii) **Weekly report and action**  
Mr. Poulton said there was nothing to report from Ted Brown's weekly inspections.

## 10 Correspondence received

### a) **Mr. P. R. Morris – Letter re removal of bench seat from outside 20 High Street**

Mr. Morris (12b High Street) has written to complain about the removal of the bench seat outside number 20 High Street. Mr. Poulton said that the ownership of the seat is unknown and its disappearance a mystery. East Herts Council and HCC are investigating the matter. Mr. Poulton said that if the seat is not found, the Parish Council could replace it at a future date.

### b) **Hertfordshire Constabulary re proposals to merge with one or more of its neighbouring forces**

Mr. Poulton said that Hertfordshire Constabulary e-mailed us on 4<sup>th</sup> October attaching the proposals to merge with one or more of its neighbouring forces. The proposals are to increase the size of the force to approximately 4,000 to 6,000. They asked for the Parish Council's views on the proposals. Because of the short timescale involved, he asked Mr. Filer to respond on behalf of the Parish Council by the of 10<sup>th</sup> October deadline.

Mr. Filer read out the questions and his responses.

**Q1. Will it affect you, your organisation, or the people you represent if Hertfordshire Constabulary is replaced by a force covering two or three counties?**

No, however there will be concern if the amalgamation leads to fewer police officers.  
The present standard of service to rural areas must be maintained and if possible enhanced.

**Q2. Are there any potential problems or advantages for you, your organisation, or the people you represent that you can foresee in having a larger merged force?**

A larger force should enable serious crime to be tackled more efficiently. However, the rural PCs and PCSOs must be retained in their present areas and be at least as visible or even more visible to the public.

**Q3. How do you see the merger affecting partnership working in the county?**

At present we know the people involved in partnership working. It would be easy in a larger organization for this to disappear.  
Priorities given to partnership working must be maintained.

**Q4. Do you think the design criteria (attached) contains everything we need to take account of in drawing up the proposals?**

Yes.

**Q5. If no, what else should be in the design criteria?**

We agree that with the principle of co-terminosity and agree that merged forces should not cross Government Regional Boundaries. Nor should any police force be split up.

### c) **Janet Goldsmith re 14 Watton House**

This item was discussed under 7 a ii, Planning applications – 14 Watton House (on page 3 of these minutes)

**d) Hertfordshire Highways – re ownership of hedge**

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter (dated 28<sup>th</sup> September 2005) from Danny Kyan, Hertfordshire Highways.

**‘Re: Stage 2 Complaint: Investigation Report Action form Recommendation 7.2**

Thank you for your letter dated 20<sup>th</sup> September 2005 advising of the Parish Council’s comment in this regard. I would clarify that recommendation 7.2 in the investigation report required me to pursue establishing clear ownership of the hedge and the purpose of my initial letter was merely to obtain the Parish Council’s views.

I can advise that I am continuing my correspondence with Mr. and Mrs. Bret to progress the matter of establishing clear ownership of the hedge. I will of course let you know of future developments.’

**e) South Anglia Housing**

Mr. Jules Bickers, Director of Customer Services (Housing) at South Anglia Housing, wrote on 7<sup>th</sup> October to advise us that in July of this year Stort Valley became South Anglia Housing, which is part of the newly-formed Circle Anglia Group. They have “restructured their teams and now have a network of Neighbourhood Officers looking after the communities to build effective partnerships with local people to deal with estate managements, crime and antisocial behaviour, as well as positive work to support community development and resident participation”.

The neighbourhood officer responsible for Watton-at-Stone is Carla Warwick, who can be contacted on 01279 714775 or by e-mail at [carla.warwick@circleanglia.org](mailto:carla.warwick@circleanglia.org).

**11 Reports from other Organisations**

None.

**12 Items for Parish News**

The following items to be sent to the Editor of the Parish News for inclusion in the next issue.

- Letter to police about motor cycle and 4-wheel drive off-roading in the parish
- Response to Hertfordshire Police on proposed Police Force Restructure
- Community Hall hire charges

Mr. Filer to write the article accordingly.

**Action: D. Filer**

Re-submit the following items to the Editor of the Parish News for inclusion in the next issue.

These items should have been included in October’s Parish News [see item 6 b, Review of actions - Write article for Parish News (on page 2 of these minutes)].

- Vandalism to Community Hall Windows
- Summer Play Scheme

The Clerk to act accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**13 Accounts**

**Watton-at-Stone Parish Council**

**Petty Cash**

**Receipts**

Colin Hawkins - Allotment rent	6.50	<b>Payments</b>	
Mr. and Mrs. Riddle	<u>13.00</u>	25 stamps x 30p	<u>7.50</u>
	<u>19.50</u>		<u>7.50</u>

**Cheques required**

St. Albans Diocesan Board	Glebe rent – MPPA land	90.00
Frank Cooper and Son	August sportsfield grass cut	123.37
Sports and Social Club	50% grant towards cost of fertiliser and seeding sportsfield	285.00
S. Presland	Strimming Allotments	50.00
Ted Brown	Litterpicking	144.00
Ted Brown	Strimming and hedge cutting work	30.00
Post Office	Tax and NI contributions	177.78
D. R. Monk	Memorial Garden maintenance	50.00
D. R. Monk	Flowerbeds	80.00
WAS PCC	Annual grant	400.00
Frank Cooper	September sportsfield grass cutting	123.37
Tree Lovers	Grass cutting work (in the absence of Adam Welch)	160.00
J. Allsop	October salary	545.01
J. Allsop	Phone calls to 03/10/05	<u>25.00</u>
		<u>2283.53</u>

**Cheques received**

Mr. J. Love	Allotment rent 2005/06	32.50
Mr. I. Beadle	Allotment rent 2005/06	6.50
Mr. R. Green	Allotment rent 2005/06	13.00
Mr. M. Inman	Allotment rent 2005/06	39.00
Ms. Hardcastle	Allotment rent 2005/06	6.50
Mr. Bell	Allotment rent 2005/06	6.50
Mick Moore	Allotment rent 2005/06	26.00
Mr. Lewis	Allotment rent 2005/06	6.50
Mr. Wolf	Allotment rent 2005/06	6.50
Mr. Bunyan	Allotment rent 2005/06	6.50
Mr. and Mrs Thurlow	Allotment rent 2005/06	26.00
Mr. J. Knight	Allotment rent 2005/06	26.00
Mr. P. Moore	Allotment rent 2005/06	13.00
Mr. B. Beadle	Allotment rent 2005/06	13.00
Mr. J. Rees	Allotment rent 2005/06	6.50
Mr. Kitchen	Allotment rent 2005/06	13.00
Mr. Phillips	Allotment rent 2005/06	39.00
Mr. Wilkinson	Allotment rent 2005/06	6.50
		<u>292.50</u>

**Watton-at-Stone Community Hall**

**Petty Cash**

**Receipts**

		<b>Payments</b>	
		Banked	<u>380.00</u>
Barry Moor – Main Hall hire	16.00		<u>380.00</u>
Floodlighting to 21/9/05	211.00		
Floodlighting to 11.10.09	160.00		
John Murphy – Main Hall	<u>9.00</u>		
	<u>396.00</u>		

**Cheques required**

The Lamp Company	4 floodlighting bulbs	282.00
Rosemary Brown	24 hours cleaning	144.00
Stevenage Glass	To replace the broken windows in the Parish Council room	749.04
Keith Burgess	Annual electrical and emergency lighting check	120.00
John Phillips	Opening toilets	30.00
J. Allsop	4 Keys for Community Hall	<u>57.86</u>
		<u>1382.90</u>

**Cheques received**

Louisa Bailey	Main Hall hire	108.00
Youth Football	Pavilion hire	14.00
Allotment & Garden Assoc	Pavilion hire	10.50
Jim Keen	Main Hall hire	60.00
Mr. Short	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	52.00
		<u>244.50</u>

Mr. Meischke proposed that the Parish Council approve the above payments, Mr. Dunhill seconded the motion, and all present were in favour.

• **East Herts Council – Invitation to a Rural Housing Conference at the Chairs Centre, Bishop’s Stortford**

Mr. Poulton said that he would be attending the half-day conference and exhibition on ‘Unlocking Land – The key to successful rural development’ on 1<sup>st</sup> November and asked if any Parish Councillor wanted to attend, to contact him.

**Action: Parish Councillors**

- **The meeting closed at 2100.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2005.**