

## Minutes of the meeting of the Wotton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2009

Present: Mr. N. Poulton (Chairman) Mr. J. Meischke (Vice-Chairman)  
 Mrs. C. Dinnin Mr. I. Harris  
 Mr. D. Filer Mr. I. Knight  
 Mrs. McCash Mr. D. Stock  
 The Clerk (Mrs. J. Allsop)

Member of public: Mr. E. Riddle

### 1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Clark and Mr. Smith.

### 2 Public Participation

None.

### 3 Declaration of Interests

Mrs. McCash declared a pecuniary interest in item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee - External audit of the Community Hall accounts by McCash and Hay (Mrs. McCash's husband, Murray McCash, prepares the audit of the Community Hall accounts).

Mr. Filer declared a personal interest in item 8 a, Community Hall – Internal decoration (Mr. Filer's son-law, Peter Phillips submitted a quotation for the decoration work).

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

Mr. Poulton had four additional planning items for this meeting.

- **Planning application for 152 Hazeldell**  
This item to be discussed under 6 a ii.
- **Planning application for 142 Hazeldell**  
This item to be discussed under 6 a iii.
- **Planning decision for 14a Beane Road**  
This item to be discussed under item 6 b ii, planning decisions.
- **Planning decision for 70 Hazeldell**  
This item to be discussed under item 6 b iii, planning decisions.

### 5 Minutes of the last meeting

#### a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2009**  
Mrs. Dinnin proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.  
Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present at that meeting were in favour.

#### b) Review of actions

- **Write to Mr. Inman re barrier at Watton Green: completed.**
- **Write letter of thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Taylor re their donation of £200: completed.**
- **Renew our CPRE membership: completed.**
- **Update Parish Councillors on the situation re Lorries & equipment at Perrywood Farm**

Mr. Poulton e-mailed all Parish Councillors on 18<sup>th</sup> March as follows.

'I've received a further phone call today from Charles Allingham, Planning Enforcement Officer at East Herts Council, re Perrywood Farm

It would appear that Enterprise are operating in the village at the moment replacing gas pipes, I believe they are currently in Walkern Road.

The items that are stored at Perrywood Farm are not Enterprise lorries but a large amount of assorted equipment which belongs to a company called Comdec, this company has evidently gone into liquidation, although Mr. Allingham can find no trace of a company of this name.

Paul Borlase is owed a considerable amount of money so he proposes to sell this equipment to cover his costs.

Scaffolding is on site as Mr. Borlase is considering putting in a planning application for conversion of the farm buildings, I must admit I thought these buildings belonged to Mr. Abel Smith.

Mr. Allingham is not happy with the answers he is getting and is pursuing further action.'

Mr. Filer said that Enterprise vehicles are still going up and down Perrywood Lane and he believed they were storing their vehicles at Perrywood Farm. He agreed to visit Perrywood Farm to see if they were being stored on site and if so, instruct the Clerk to write again to Charles Allingham.

**Action: D. Filer/J. Allsop**

- **Write to planning department re 142 Hazeldell: completed.**
- **Write to planning department re Tudor Cottage, Whempstead Road, Whempstead: completed.**
- **Write to planning department re 14a Beane Road: completed.**
- **Write to planning department re Heath Mount School, Woodhall Park: completed.**
- **Write to planning department re 70 Hazeldell: completed.**
- **Write to all allotment holders re rent increase and Expectations/Explanations details: completed.**
- **Agree the design of the Allotment map**  
Mr. Meischke has agreed the layout of the allotment map, which is now being made up by the sign-makers.
- **Photocopy village directory ready for distribution in the Parish News: completed.**
- **Complete Whempstead section for the new website: outstanding.** **Action: C. Clark**
- **Complete Neighbourhood Watch and Healthcare sections for the new website**  
Mrs. McCash said that she needed to finish talks with PCSO Paul Weston on the Neighbourhood Watch section for the new website. She has also asked Doctors David Haslam and Delish Shah for a website entry on Healthcare.  
This item to remain an action point. **Action: H. McCash**
- **Contact Vernon Dunhill re maps and footpath sections for the new website**  
Mr. Stock said that Mr. Vernon Dunhill is happy to help with the Maps and Public Footpaths sections of the new website. **Action: V. Dunhill**
- **Inspect metal seat supports sticking out of the ground on the sportsfield and remove: completed.**
- **Renew Community Hall insurance: completed.**
- **Obtain a copy of the example risk assessment document from BDO Stoy Hayward: completed.**
- **Draw up a Risk Assessment register for the Parish Council and Community Hall Trustees**  
This item to be deferred until the June Parish Council meeting **Agenda: 06/09**
- **Purchase memory stick to back up data**  
Mr. Poulton proposed that the Parish Council purchase an external hard-drive instead of a memory stick as it has a more reliable back-up system. Mr. Filer seconded the motion and all present were in favour. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Adjust the coin-operated machine after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009: completed.**
- **Fit soap dispensers in all internal toilets, the kitchen and the ladies outside toilet: completed.**  
Refer to item 8a, Community Hall Trustees - Minutes and report on meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2009.
- **Speak to Helen Doubal (Grants Officer, Hertfordshire Community Foundation) re surplus funds**  
Mr. Knight obtained Helen Doubal's consent to purchase notice boards for the kitchen and two large changing rooms.
- **Ask Floodlighting Limited to supply us with information re a maintenance contract**  
Refer to item 8 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee - MPPA – Floodlighting refurbishment.
- **Contact Tom Goldsmith (CMS) re The stile on the allotments adjacent to the property 'Kimberley'**  
Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Meeting with the Countryside Management Service re the Parish Paths Partnership grant.
- **Ask Adam Welch to do clearance work on the Lammas before the end of March**  
Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Ditch maintenance on the Lammas Bank.
- **Inspect the graffiti on all the play equipment on the sportsfield and remove if possible: completed.**
- **Inspect broken branch on the sportsfield and remove: completed.**
- **Dispose of the white plastic container in War Memorial garden: completed.**
- **Remove and dispose of engineering bricks from store cupboard: completed.**
- **Send donation to the River Beane Restoration Association: completed.**
- **Write Parish News article re installation of the replacement floodlighting units: completed.**

- **Write Parish News article re adoption of the Major Incident Emergency Plan: outstanding.**  
**Action: H. McCash**
- **Meet with the Clerk to finalise salary and conditions of employment: completed.**
- **Report on meeting with Oliver Heald MP to discuss loss of trees within the village**  
Mr. Stock said that Oliver Heald MP was sympathetic about the continued loss of trees within the village and agreed with our concerns and objectives. He has subsequently written to Hertfordshire County Council and East Herts Council on the matter. However, to date, a response has been received from East Herts Council only and this concerned the loss of trees within the Great Innings play area. As a result of this response, Mr. Stock is to contact Mr. Trevor Waldoock to arrange a site meeting between himself, Mrs. Dinnin and an Area Environmental Inspector to discuss the matter further. **Action: D. Stock**  
If no response has been received from Hertfordshire County Council by 4<sup>th</sup> May, Mr. Stock to contact our MP again. **Action: D. Stock**

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

- **Arrange for the MPPA fencing to be professionally repaired**  
Refer to item 8 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee - Renewal of part of wire fence on MPPA.

**6 Planning**

**a) Applications**

**i) Blue Bury Farm, Walkern Road (3/09/0367/FO)**

Variation of condition 4 of planning permission ref 3/04/0501/FP allow loft space in the garage to be used as a bedroom

Mr. Poulton said that Mr. Smith decided not to attend the meeting tonight so that Parish Councillors could discuss this application without any restraints. Mr. Smith is aware of the Parish Council’s previous comments re application number 3/04/0501/fp.

Mr. Poulton read out planning condition 4 as follows

‘The garage(s) shall be used for the housing of private vehicles and not as additional living accommodation or any commercial activity.

Reason:

To ensure the continued provision of off-street parking facilities in the interest of highway safety to safeguard the amenities of adjoining occupiers, and in accordance with policy BE7(II) and Appendix IV of the East Herts Local Plan.

(II) The District council May also impose conditions or seek agreements preventing the later conversion of domestic garages into additional habitable room unless adequate compensatory off-street parking provision is made.

Mr. Poulton then read out the applicants reasons for the removal of condition 4.

‘To accommodate agricultural students who help us and gain work experience during eight to ten weeks of the harvest period.’

In 2004, the Parish Council wrote to the planning department concerning application number 3/04/0501/FP for a double detached garage with storage as follows.

‘The Parish Council has no objections to the above application.

However, it is noted that there is a large void in the roof and we would not want to see this turned into any form of living accommodation in the future.’

Parish Councillors discussed the application at length and took a vote by show of hands as follows.

- Two in favour of condition 4 being lifted.
- Four against condition 4 being lifted.
- Two abstained from voting.

It was agreed to write to the planning department stating that the Parish Council objects to condition 4 being lifted and does not want to see any part of the double detached garage with storage turned into any form of living accommodation in the future. **Action: J. Allsop**

**ii) 152 Hazeldell (3/09/0543/FP/JS)**

Single storey front extension

Mr. Stock said that this is a standard infill extension. The garage has already been converted into living accommodation. He was sorry to see that a flat roofed extension is proposed and not the favoured pitched room version.

Parish Councillors looked at the plans and agreed to write to East Herts Council informing them that they have no comment on the application. **Action: J. Allsop**

iii) 142 Hazeldell (3/09/0555/FP/JS)

**Replacement rear conservatory**

This item to be deferred for discussion at the May Parish Council meeting as the plans were not available for inspection. **Agenda: 05/09**

**b) Decisions**

i) 27 High Street 3/09/ 0195/FP/HS

Demolition of existing dwelling and the erection of 5 bedroom detached dwelling (revised scheme) (retrospective) - East Herts Council - Permission granted

ii) 14a Beane Road (3/09/0228/FP/SD)

One new detached four bedroom bungalow and double garage - East Herts Council - Permission refused

iii) 70 Hazeldell (3/09/0235/FP/MC)

Single storey front extension - East Herts Council - Permission granted

**7 Specific items**

**a) Strimming work on Parish Council land at Rivershill**

Mr. Poulton said that the annual strimming-work on the Parish Council land at Rivershill is now due.

Mr. Clark had informed Mr. Meischke that Tim Clark would contact him re the annual strimming-work. To-date Mr. Meischke has not been contacted by Tim Clark.

This item to remain on the agenda.

**Agenda: 05/09**

**8 Reports**

**a) Sub-Committees**

**Budget & Finance**

Mr. Filer reported on the following items.

• **Monthly accounts**

**Watton-at-Stone Parish Council**

**Petty Cash**

**Receipts**

|                                    | <u>Receipts</u> | <b>Payments</b>                                   |              |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|---|--------------|
| Jane Allsop – Allianz bank charges | 32.00           | Stamps 32 x 27p                                   | 9.72         |
|                                    | <u>32.00</u>    | 3 reams of ivory copy paper for village directory | <u>13.70</u> |
|                                    |                 |   | <u>23.42</u> |

**Cheques issued**

|                                      |  |                |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------|
| CPRE                                 | Annual subscription  | 29.00          |
| Ted Brown                            | Clearance work   | 68.00          |
| St. Albans Diocesan Board of Finance | Glebe rent - Allotments                                    | 90.00          |
| J. Allsop                            | Additional March salary                                    | 514.50         |
| Post Office Limited                  | HM Revenue and Customs - Tax and NI                        | 375.88         |
| BSWW Parish News                     | Photocopying and delivering Village Directory              | 50.00          |
| River Beane Restoration Association  | Donation   | 25.00          |
| Fred Burnell                         | Remove and dispose of dead badger                          | 34.50          |
| Ted Brown                            | 24 hours litterpick  | 174.00         |
| Ted Brown                            | 8 hours litterpick   | 60.80          |
| Ted Brown                            | Strim and Mowing around sportsfield and garden maintenance | <u>100.00</u>  |
|                                      |  | <u>1521.68</u> |

**Cheques received**

|                        |                        |               |
|------------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| Sports and Social Club | Sportsfield facilities | 312.50        |
| Mr. D. Fitzgerald      | Allotment rent 2008/09 | 8.00          |
| Mr. B. Sharp           | Allotment rent 2008/09 | <u>8.00</u>   |
|                        |                        | <u>328.50</u> |

**Watton-at-Stone Community Hall**

**Petty Cash**

**Receipts**

|                                | <u>Receipts</u> | <b>Payments</b>   |               |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|---|---------------|
| Floodlighting to 31.03.09      | 74.00           | HCC – cleaning material                                 | 8.76          |
| John Murphy - Main Hall hire   | 12.00           | B. Thompson 16 <sup>th</sup> and 17 <sup>th</sup> March | 42.00         |
| H. Brownlow - Main Hall and    | 39.00           | B. Thompson 23 <sup>rd</sup> and 24 <sup>th</sup> March | 42.00         |
| Ladies Football – Meeting room | 11.00           | B. Thompson 30 <sup>th</sup> and 31 <sup>st</sup> March | 42.00         |
| Jim Keen – Main Hall           | <u>50.00</u>    | B. Thompson 6 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> April   | 44.10         |
|                                |                 | B and Q – macadam to repair play area surface           | <u>3.98</u>   |
|                                | <u>186.00</u>   |   | <u>182.84</u> |

**Cheques issued**

|                        |   |                |
|------------------------|---|----------------|
| H. M. Revenue and      | Vat return 02/09  | 129.19         |
| A. P. Access           | Service locks at CH and attend to lose handles          | 115.86         |
| Gary Smith             | Window Cleaning   | 57.00          |
| Hertfordshire County   | 3 Notice boards   | 196.41         |
| John Phillips          | Toilet opening from 24.01.09 to 31.03.09                | 67.00          |
| Rosemary Brown         | 12 hours cleaning                                       | 84.00          |
| Suffolk Acre Services  | Annual insurance premium                                | 2896.06        |
| Rosemary Brown         | 4 hours cleaning  | 29.40          |
| N. Poulton             | 2 metal dustpans  | 13.98          |
| A. P. Access           | Install new Main Hall lock                              | 40.25          |
| J. Allsop              | Reimbursement of Laidlaw invoice for new Main Hall lock | 72.10          |
| Watton Service Station | 7 soap dispensers and 11 soap refills                   | <u>138.17</u>  |
|                        |   | <u>3839.42</u> |

**Cheques received**

|                        |                             |                |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Peter Evernden         | Pavilion hire               | 35.00          |
| Mrs. Hill              | Main Hall and Pavilion hire | 58.50          |
| Sports and Social Club | Community Hall facilities   | 312.50         |
| Badminton Club         | Main Hall hire              | 135.00         |
| Dots and Tots          | Pavilion hire               | 163.80         |
| Dave Boddy             | Main Hall and Pavilion hire | <u>367.20</u>  |
|                        |                             | <u>1072.00</u> |

Mrs. McCash proposed that the Parish Council approves the above payments. Mr. Meischke seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

**Note: 1**

The Clerk forgot to transfer money from the Parish Council instant reserve account to the current account and therefore there were insufficient funds to pay her salary cheque which she had presented at her bank. Allianz have charged £32 for this error and the Clerk has reimbursed the Parish Council accordingly (refer to Parish Council petty cash income above).

**Note: 2**

The following items should have appeared above under Parish Council – cheques received.

|                    |                        |               |
|--------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| Linda Aldridge     | Allotment rent 2008/09 | 8.00          |
| Helen McCash       | Allotment rent 2008/09 | 8.00          |
| Laura Hansing      | Allotment rent 2008/09 | 8.00          |
| East Herts Council | Leaf pick grant        | <u>400.00</u> |
|                    |                        | <u>424.00</u> |

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

Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of the Parish Council and Community Hall statement of accounts for the year ending the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009.

Mr. Filer went through the expenditure and income items for both the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts and explained the variations in the statements.

• **Summary of 12-monthly statement of accounts for the year ended 2008/09**

Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of the summary 12-monthly statement of accounts for the Parish Council and Community Hall for the year ending the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009, which will be presented at the Annual Parish meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> May. **Action: J. Allsop**

• **Parish Council insurance**

Allianz have sent the Parish Council insurance papers which are due for renewal on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2009. As agreed, they have deleted the LTA from the new policy documents, which allows the Parish Council to obtain quotations from other brokers.

Mr. Filer and the Clerk to liaise over obtaining quotations.

**Action: D. Filer/J. Allsop**

• **Asset register**

No comments

• **Internal audit of Parish Council accounts by Jim Morrissey**

The Clerk will arrange for the Parish Council accounts to be audited by Jim Morrissey before the May Parish Council meeting. **Action: J. Allsop**

• **Annual Return of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009**

BDO Stoy Hayward LLP wrote on 31<sup>st</sup> March informing us of the details for the annual audit for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009. The public inspection period starts on 18<sup>th</sup> May and ends on 15<sup>th</sup> June (notices advertising the inspection period need to be displayed from 4<sup>th</sup> May to 17<sup>th</sup> May inclusive), the completed Annual Return and all relevant documentation needs to be sent to BDO Stoy Hayward LLP by 19<sup>th</sup> June 2009.

• **Quarterly accounts spot-check**

Mrs. McCash said that during a visit to the Clerk's home on 30<sup>th</sup> March to carry-out a spot-check on the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts, she found everything to be in perfect order.

Mrs. McCash did an audit trail on the following.

- **Parish Council accounts**

Four cheques, three petty cash entries, and four receipts of payment.

- **Community Hall accounts**

Three cheques, two petty cash entries, and three receipts of payment.

Mrs. McCash said she had just completed the annual return for Benington Parish Council and noted that the items spot-checked were detailed on a separate sheet. She will prepare a similar document when she completes the next spot-check, which will be before the end of June 2009.

- **External audit of the Community Hall accounts by McCash and Hay**

The Clerk will arrange for the Community Hall accounts to be audited by McCash and Hay before the May Parish Council meeting.

**Action: J. Allsop**

### **Community Hall Trustees**

Mr. Poulton reported on the following items.

- **Minutes and report on meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2009**

Mr. Knight proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

Mr. Stock seconded the motion and Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke were in favour. Mr. Poulton signed the minutes.

- **Change of Gas Supplier**

NPower have confirmed that our two-year gas contract with them commenced on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

However, British Gas has been unwilling to close our account. The Clerk has been in contact with Owen Pemberton (Make it Cheaper), who set up the new contract, to try to resolve the situation. If the problem has not been resolved by early next week, the Clerk to give the paperwork to Mr. Meischke so he can resolve the matter.

**Action: J. Allsop/J. Meischke**

- **Metal dustpans**

Mr. Poulton has purchased two metal dustpans for the Community Hall cleaners.

- **New Main Hall lock**

A new Main Hall lock, which is lockable on both sides and does not have a thumb turn on the inside of the door, has been fitted. This will prevent members of the Watton Youth Drop Inn from running around from the Pavilion into the Main Hall, then out of the other Main Hall door and down the corridor and back into the Pavilion. The Watton Youth Drop Inn has agreed to pay all costs.

The Clerk to give Mr. Poulton copies of Laidlaw's invoice for the lock and A. P Access' invoice for installing the lock.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Condition of pavilion**

Following a verbal complaint made about the condition of the Pavilion the Trustees inspected the Pavilion and agreed that once a month Brian Thompson be instructed to clean the skirting boards, radiators, doors, window sills, remove any cobwebs and any other items that require a clean over.

This would be in addition to the normal weekly clean.

**Action: J. Meischke**

The following recommendations from the Community Hall Trustees were agreed.

- **Internal Decorations**

Bob Adams quotation of £391, to decorate the changing room corridor and adjoining Ladies and Gents toilets, be accepted.

- **Hiring charge for Meeting Room**

Reduce the Meeting Room hire charges from £7 to £5 per hour.

- **Request from organisers of the Parish News for use of the Meeting Room**

BSWW Parish News be charged for the use of the Meeting Room facilities and the Clerk to inform Diana Ranzetta accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Industrial clean of changing rooms and showers**

Mr. Poulton is obtaining three quotations for industrially cleaning the changing room, showers, toilets, and corridor area.

The internal decoration work will be done in approximately June or July after the industrial cleaning has been carried-out.

- **Quotation from Sunstopper Blinds for work to be done on the blinds in the Pavilion**

Mr. Poulton said that the pavilion blinds are coming towards the end of their serviceable life.

Sunstopper Blinds have quoted £309 plus VAT to repair three vertical Louvre headrails and re-hand existing vanes and replace damaged weight and connecting chain.

Mr. Poulton to instruct them to do the work.

**Action: N. Poulton**

- **Fire exit between the Main hall and pavilion**

The fire exit door from the Main Hall into the pavilion was blocked by hirers using the Pavilion.

It was agreed to put up laminated signs on both sides of the door asking for this fire exit to be kept clear at all times.

**Action: I. Knight**

### Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **MPPA – Floodlighting refurbishment**

Mr. Knight said that now that the floodlighting refurbishment is complete he is waiting for the Grassroots end of project forms from Helen Doubal (Grants Officer, Hertfordshire Community Foundation) which will need completing and returning. The £5,000 grant also includes the purchase of three notice boards for the kitchen and two changing rooms.

**Action: I. Knight**

- **MPPA – pressure washing**

Halcyon Courts have done an excellent job of the moss-kill and pressure wash on the MPPA. Mr. Knight said that he anticipates the invoice will be approximately £740, which is two-thirds of the price quoted by Doe Sport.

- **Football facilities**

Alastair Woodgate (Rumball Sedgwick) wrote on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2009 informing us that the Glebe Committee's decision to decline the Parish Council's request for additional land for football facilities (refer to the minutes of the Trustees meeting dated 7<sup>th</sup> April).

The Trustees have recommended that the Parish Council does not pursue the matter further. Parish Councillors present at the meeting agreed the recommendation.

The Sports and Social Club now need to consider what other options are available for additional football facilities.

- **Renewal of part of wire fence on MPPA**

Mr. Knight is in the process of obtaining quotations from three fencing supplies (including Halcyon Courts, who did the moss-kill and pressure wash and work on the MPPA). The section of fencing that needs replacing is directly behind the sportsfield football goal posts and has been damaged by being repeatedly hit by footballs.

Russell Fencing has quoted £578:

To supply and install, 17 metres of 1.8-metre high green plastic coated chain link with new line wires, with an additional £30 to remove the old chain link from site.

All prices include VAT.

The MPPA maintenance 2009/10 budget is £1,300. Approximately £740 of this budget has been spent on the moss-kill and pressure wash leaving £560. Any over-spend can be taken out of the contingency budget.

### Environment

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Cottage Site**

Mrs. Dinnin said that she had contacted Tony Bradford about the trees that were planted on the Cottage site last year because some of them have died or gone missing. Mr. Bradford thinks some of these trees may still be alive. He intends to plant more Hawthorns this year and hopes to do the hedging work along the roadside section.

- **Ditch maintenance on the Lammas Bank**

Adam Welch has quoted £220 for work to be done along the Lammas bank including the removal of Elders and pruning back other trees. Mr. Filer proposed that Mr. Welch's quotation be accepted.

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

**Action: C. Dinnin**

- **Oak tree branches overhanging MPPA**

The Clerk wrote to Malcolm Amey (Landscape Officer, East Herts Council) on 23<sup>rd</sup> March asking him to inspect the two oak trees on the Sportsfield at Watton-at-Stone because some of the branches are very close to the new floodlights on the MPPA.

Mr. Amey has replied (letter dated 15<sup>th</sup> April) as follows.

'I write with reference to your letter of 24<sup>th</sup> March regarding the Oak trees and new lighting columns.

As you know these Oak trees are protected by a Tree Preservation Order Ref. P/TPO 34 and if you propose reducing back the minimum number of branches to clear these lights then an application needs to be made. I enclose a copy of the new form which became mandatory as from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008 under new legislation. I also enclose a copy of the national and our local guidance; the form and the guidance is available on our website.

Should you wish to discuss proposed tree work or making an application please contact me on the above extension number.'

Mr. Poulton passed Mr. Amey's letter and enclosures to Mr. Knight for his attention. **Action: I. Knight**

- **Countryside Management Service - stile on the allotments**

Mrs Dinnin has not been in contact with Tom Goldsmith regarding the paperwork for the replacement gate on the allotments adjacent to the property 'Kimberley'. Because the Parish Council is leasing the Allotment land, the financial responsibility of installing the new gate may lie with the land owners, the St. Albans Diocesan Board.

It was agreed to write to the St. Albans Diocesan Board accordingly and write to Tom Goldsmith and inform him of this action.

**Action: C. Dinnin/J. Allsop**

- **Lammas Road - grass verge replaced with paving**

Mrs. Dinnin received a complaint from a resident of Lammas Road regarding a new driveway installation. Mrs. Dinnin and Mr. Knight have investigated the matter and nothing inappropriate appears to be taking place.

Mrs Dinnin will visit Lamas Road to make sure the grass verges have been re-instated before the next Parish Council meeting.

**Action: C. Dinnin**

**b) Routine reports**

**i) Fire-alarm test**

The fire-alarm was tested before the start of the meeting by Mr. Poulton.

**ii) Monthly village-report**

Mr. Clark completed this report on the 19<sup>th</sup> April 2009, the result of which is as follows.

- **Sportsfield:**

|                    |            |
|--------------------|------------|
| Condition of grass | Good.      |
| Litter             | None.      |
| Dog fouling        | None.      |
| General            | Very good. |

- **Children's Play Area:**

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Condition of surface         | Good                                   |
| Litter/Litterbin             | Nearly empty.                          |
| Large swings                 | Seats beginning to show wear – splits. |
| Small swings                 | OK.                                    |
| See-Saw                      | OK.                                    |
| Rainbow multi-play and slide | OK.                                    |
| Two spring sit-on            | OK.                                    |
| Teen shelter                 | OK.                                    |
| General                      | Very tidy.                             |

- **Bike ramps area:**

|             |                           |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| Junior Jump | OK. }                     |
| Double Ramp | OK. } No evidence of use. |
| Fun Box     | OK. }                     |
| General     | -                         |

- **Community Hall:**

|                              |        |
|------------------------------|--------|
| General Condition (Exterior) | Good.  |
| Litterbin                    | Empty. |
| Car Park                     | Good.  |
| General                      | Good.  |

- **Multi-Purpose Play Area:**

|                    |            |
|--------------------|------------|
| Surface            | Good.      |
| Boundary Fencing ) | Good.      |
| Tennis nets        | Good.      |
| Litter             | None.      |
| General            | Very good. |

NB the plywood on the gate diagonally across from the main gate requires minor attention as it is splintered.

- **Great Innings Play Area:**

|             |       |
|-------------|-------|
| Equipment   | Good. |
| Surfaces    | Good. |
| Litter      | None. |
| Dog fouling | None. |
| Trees       | OK.   |

- Comments Tidy and in use.
- **Allotments Area:**
    - Access Good.
    - Condition of paths between Allotments Good.
    - Condition of Allotments under cultivation Good.
    - Condition of Allotments not under cultivation Good.
    - Litter None.
    - Comments Very good.
  - **Culverts on Mill Lane**
    - Litter and rubbish in and around Culverts A little.
    - Dog-fouling Some.
    - Comments Generally OK
  - **Salt bins**
    - Perrywood Lane ½ full.
    - Entrance to Great Innings Empty and broken lid.
    - Great Innings South – outside number 93 Empty.
    - Station Road Empty.
    - Moorymead Close (2) Both full.
    - Hazeldell Empty.
    - Footpath 17 2/3 full.
    - Beane Road Empty.
  - **Dog-waste bins**
    - Footpath 17 OK.
    - Sportsfield OK.
    - Church Walk OK.
    - Walkern Road OK.
    - Station Road (opposite Rectory Lane) OK.
    - Station Road (by station) OK.
    - High Street (by Memorial) OK.
    - Great Innings OK.
    - Mill Lane OK.
    - Opposite 5 School Lane OK.
  - **War Memorial**
    - Comments Needs weeding and general attention.
  - **Ornate Village Sign**
    - Comments OK.
    - Post OK.
  - **General Comments**
    -
  - **Large swing seats**
    - Mr. Poulton and Mr. Stock inspected the swing seats during their 6-monthly check of MPPA, Play Area on sportsfield and Community Hall equipment (on 7<sup>th</sup> April) and said they do not need replacing at this time.
  - **MPPA gate**
    - Mr. Knight to inspect the gate and take action as necessary. **Action: I. Knight**
  - **War Memorial Garden**
    - Mrs. Dinnin to ask Adam Welch to attend to the War Memorial garden. **Action: C. Dinnin**

**iii) Weekly sportsfield-report and action**

Nothing to report.

**iv) 6-monthly check of MPPA, Play Area on sportsfield and Community Hall equipment**

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Stock did the six-monthly check on the 7<sup>th</sup> April, the result of which is as follows

| MPPA         |  |                          |                 |                   |
|--------------|--|--------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Area         | Check  | OK                       | Needs Attention | Comments (if any) |
| Hard surface | Is it free of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holes</li> <li>• Cracks</li> <li>• Litter/debris</li> <li>• Weeds</li> </ul> | OK.<br>OK.<br>OK.<br>OK. |                 |                   |

|   |   |   |                 |  |
|---|---|---|-----------------|--|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moss etc.</li> <li>• Court marking</li> </ul>  | OK.<br>OK.                                    |                 |  |
| Kicker boards   | <p>Are they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure</li> <li>• Graffiti-free</li> <li>• In good condition.</li> </ul> <p>Check for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protruding nails</li> <li>• Protruding screws</li> <li>• Splinters/cracks</li> <li>• Missing nails/screws</li> </ul> <p>Are the gates free of graffiti, loose/missing nails/screws, cracks and splinters</p> <p>Do the gates open, close and lock</p> | OK.<br>OK.<br>OK.<br>OK.<br>OK.<br>OK.<br>OK. |                 | First board on the bottom right is loose.                                |
| Tennis posts  | Condition   | OK.   |                 |  |
| Tennis nets   | Condition   | OK.   |                 |  |
| Flood lights  | <p>Are the lamps in contact with the trees</p> <p>Are the lamp posts in good order and free of graffiti</p>   | No.<br>OK.                                    |                 |  |
| Wire fence  | Is the wire mesh:   |   |                 |  |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secured to posts</li> <li>• Free of cuts/breaks</li> <li>• In good condition</li> </ul> <p>Is the metal-work (e.g. posts, etc.) secure and in good condition</p>   | OK.   |                 | Wire mesh on right hand side section beyond centre gate needs replacing. |
| Notice board  | <p>Is it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legible</li> <li>• Free of graffiti</li> <li>• Secure</li> <li>• Free of damage</li> </ul>   | OK.<br>OK.<br>OK.<br>OK.                      |                 |  |
| Boundary  | Is it:  |   |                 |  |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free of litter</li> <li>• In need of a cut</li> <li>• Free of problem growth</li> </ul>  | OK.<br>OK.<br>OK.                             |                 |  |
| General/additional comments (if any): - .   |   |   |                 |  |
| <b>Play Area on sportsfield</b>   |   |   |                 |  |
| Check the following points on all pieces of play equipment (i.e. Large swings, small swings, seesaw, multi play/slide 2 spring sit-on). |   |   | Needs Attention | Comments (if any)  |
| 1   | All structures and frameworks should be checked to ensure there is not bending, warping, cracking, loosening or breaking.   | OK.   |                 |  |
| 2   | Platforms should be free from trip hazards and protruding bolts.  | OK.   |                 |  |
| 3   | Fixed items of equipment should be checked to ensure parts are not bent, broken, loosened, worn, or missing.  | OK.   |                 |  |
| 4   | There should be no sharp points or protrusions.   | OK.   |                 |  |
| 5   | Welds should not be damaged or corroded.  | OK.   |                 |  |
| 6   | Access points should be checked to ensure there are no missing or broken runs and steps or treads are not loose.  | OK.   |                 |  |
| 7   | Exposed mechanisms and moving components have no pinch or crush points.   | OK.   |                 |  |

|    |  |     |  |   |
|----|--|-----|--|---|
| 8  | Guards, handrails, or swing barriers are not missing, bent or broken and have no loose components.   | OK. |  |   |
| 9  | All drain holes are clear.   | OK. |  |   |
| 10 | All fastenings are secure.   | OK. |  |   |
| 11 | Swing seats and seats in general are not damaged; do not have sharp corners, insecure fittings, chain wear and have no loose or missing components   | OK. |  |   |
| 12 | Foundations are not cracked, loose in the ground or corroded at the base.  | OK. |  |   |
| 13 | Mechanical devices and other moving parts have no worn bearings, are not seized or have excessive or unduly noisy motion, have incorrect clearances and/or missing covers.   | OK. |  |   |
| 14 | There is no play in bearings and they are greased/lubricated. If, after adjustment, there is still play in the bearings, they should be replaced immediately. Note – special attention should be given to “sealed for life” parts. | OK. |  |   |
| 15 | For all types of protective surfacing there should be no trip points, areas where water will lay, holes or litter.   |     |  | Hole in tarmac by large swings needs repairing. |
| 16 | The surface finish of equipment should be free from rust and other corrosion, cracks, splinters, sharp edges and broken or open joints.  | OK. |  |   |

| Community Hall   |   |     |                 |                            |
|--|---|-----|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Area   | Check   | OK  | Needs Attention | Comments (if any)          |
| <b>Pavilion</b>  |   |     |                 |                            |
| Tables   | Condition   | OK. |                 |                            |
| Chairs   | Condition   | OK. |                 |                            |
| Corner seat unit   | Condition   | OK. |                 |                            |
| Blinds   | Condition   |     |                 | Two blinds need repairing. |
| Clock  | Condition   | OK. |                 |                            |
| <b>Main Hall</b>   |   |     |                 |                            |
| 2 Benches  | Condition   | OK. |                 |                            |
| Badminton posts *  | Condition   | OK. |                 |                            |
| Badminton net  | Condition   | OK. |                 |                            |
| Sports floor   | Condition   | OK. |                 |                            |
| Floor markings **  | Condition   | OK. |                 |                            |
| External toilets   | Condition   | OK. |                 |                            |
| Internal toilets   | Condition   | OK. |                 |                            |
| <b>Showers</b>   | Condition   | OK. |                 |                            |
| <b>Kitchen</b>   | Condition   | OK. |                 |                            |
| First Aid box  | Contents: Are they out-of-date or damaged. Are there any items missing. | OK. |                 |                            |
| <b>Fire exit signs</b>   |   | OK. |                 |                            |
| <b>Fire extinguishers</b>  |   | OK. |                 |                            |
| <b>General/additional comments (if any):</b> Wash internal walls and doors in changing rooms and showers. Obtain quote from an industrial cleaner. |   |     |                 |                            |

• **Tarmac adjacent to the safety surface by the large swings**

Mr. Poulton has purchased a tarmac repair kit to repair the damaged tarmac surface adjacent to the large swings. He and Mr. Stock plan to do the work tomorrow morning (Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April).

**Action: N. Poulton/D. Stock**

- **Loose MPPA kicker board**

Mr. Knight agreed to secure the loose kicker boards.

**Action: I. Knight**

## 9 Correspondence received

### a) **Rumball Sedgwick – re Parish Council’s request for additional land**

This item was discussed under 8 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee - Football facilities.

### b) **Floodlighting Limited – Equipment guarantees**

The Floodlighting guarantees to be kept on file. All Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of the guarantees with the minutes of the Trustees meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> April.

### c) **Letter from Terry Welsh, 17 Moorymead Close**

Mr. Poulton has received further correspondence from Mr. Welsh (17 Moorymead Close) concerning building work at his neighbours property, 16 Moorymead Close.

Mr. Poulton has subsequently spoken to the planning department about this application, who confirmed that the extension at the rear of 16 Moorymead Close now comes under a permitted rights development and does not require planning permission. However, the rear garage wall, which had to be demolished to enable the extension to be built, will need rebuilding when the work is complete. The planning department also confirmed that the garage cannot be used for living accommodation. If required, East Herts Council will inspect the site to see that the planning regulations have been conformed to.

### d) **Letter from R. M. Abel Smith re rabbit control**

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter (dated 25<sup>th</sup> March) addressed to Mr. Meischke from Mr. Abel Smith.

‘I am writing to the Parish Council through you to raise again the issue of the rabbits living in and emanating from the Lammas land.

You may remember that this became an issue about three years ago and the Parish Council did take some action to reduce the rabbit population. However, it has now exploded again and the field to the east of the bypass is now overrun; they are even now crossing the bypass and eating crops in the field to the east.

We have been undertaking a major program of rabbit control in the last year but the results are compromised if there is not a unified approach to this problem throughout.

I and/our keeper, Nick Fox, would be glad to discuss this matter with you or any other representative of the Parish Council.

One way or the other, action is required from the Parish Council, please, to conform with its own legal obligations in this respect.’

Mr. Poulton said that he had a site meeting with the Abel Smith Estate’s Head Keeper, Nick Fox (on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April), who confirmed that the Parish Council is doing all in its power to control the rabbits under its own legal obligation. He showed him the Lammas bank, which has been cleared of all undergrowth, which could harbour rabbits and informed him that Mr. Bob Adams has been authorised to ferret this area on a regular basis.

Mr. Fox informed Mr. Poulton that the Abel Smith estate will shoot rabbits to control their population from the Lammas bank to the bypass. This will take place during the day up until 22.00 hours and all necessary safety precautions will be imposed, including making the police aware.

A letter to be sent to Mr. Abel Smith informing him that Mr. Poulton has met with Nick Fox, who has agreed to keep Mr. Abel Smith updated on the situation.

**Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Poulton to write to Nick Fox to confirm the contents of their meeting.

**Action: N. Poulton**

### e) **Letter from East Herts Council re Rural Parish Conference to be held 27<sup>th</sup> May 2009**

Mr. Filer agreed to attend the Rural Parish Conference. However, he said he would only be able to attend in the morning.

**Action: D. Filer**

The Clerk to return the register form accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

### f) **Letter from East Herts Council re Oak Trees adjacent to Tennis Courts**

Refer to item 8 a, East Herts Council - Oak tree branches overhanging MPPA.

### g) **Letter from Hertfordshire County Council re Common Land**

Richard Cuthbert, Head of Rights of Way, Environmental Management Group, Hertfordshire County Council, wrote on 9<sup>th</sup> April outlining the areas of common land in the village (which remain unchanged) and enclosing an associated map and a copy of the Commons Act 2006.

This item to be filed in the Parish Council register.

**Action: J. Allsop**

## 10 Village organisations

- **Wotton Youth Drop Inn:** Nothing to report.
- **Wotton-at-Stone School Governors:** Nothing to report.
- **Wotton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Watch:** Nothing to report.
- **Wotton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association**  
Mr. Meischke has identified four additional half-plots at the bottom end of the allotment. These plots have been included on the new allotments map. All the new plots are on uncultivated land and one of these plots have already been let.  
Mr. Meischke to arrange a meeting of the Allotment Management Working Group prior to the Allotment and Garden Association's AGM on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Wotton-at-Stone Memorial Hall Management Committee:** Nothing to report.
- **Wotton-at-Stone Pre-School Playgroup:** Nothing to report.
- **Wotton-at-Stone Scout & Guide Group:** Nothing to report.
- **Wotton-at-Stone Sports & Social Club**  
In Mr. Smith's absence, Mr. Knight reported that the Ladies Football team would like to request the use of the Pavilion and kitchen when they have a home match booked.  
It was agreed that the Sports and Social Club should submit the request in writing **Action: I. Knight**
- **Police Authority**  
Mrs. McCash attended the Hertfordshire Police Authority launch of Hertfordshire's Policing Plan on 27<sup>th</sup> March, because Mr. Filer was unable to do so.  
Mrs. McCash said she had a very enjoyable and informative day. Due to a shortage of money, a cut in over-time has been instigated and PCSO hours have been reduced.  
Herts Police are now in partnership with Beds police to cover major crimes, major firearms and forensic examinations.  
Mr. McCash raised a couple of questions, which the Deputy Chief-Constable agreed to follow up for her. One was concerning rural PCSOs and Rural Constables being sent out on duty single-handed. She pointed out that, where this might work in town areas, it is not practical in rural areas. Firstly, the officers are put at additional risk attending incidents on their own and back-up support if required is not a quick process. In addition, there are not enough vehicles to allow all PCSOs and Rural Constables to go out on their own and often officers are being dropped off in rural locations and have to wait to be picked up when their colleagues return to collect them. Public transport is not a practical option, as some rural areas have virtually no services.  
Secondly, she raised the reduction in the opening hours at Hertford Police Station. The response was that there is a police station open within 20 miles of every member of public in the Hertfordshire area.
- **River Beane Restoration Association:** Nothing to report.

## 11 Items for Parish News

There were no items identified for inclusion in the May 2009 issue of the Parish News.

- **Apologies of Absence**  
Mr. Filer gave his apologies for the following meetings to be held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2009
  - Annual Parish Meeting
  - Annual meeting of the Parish Council
  - Parish Council meeting.
- **The meeting closed at 20.52 hours.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2009.**