

PARISH REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2008/2009

Watton at Stone Parish Council is made up of ten elected members.

Mr. N. Poulton (Chairman)	Mr. J. Meischke (Vice-Chairman)
Mr. C. Clark	Mrs. C. Dinnin
Mr. D. Filer	Mr. I. Harris
Mr. I. Knight	Mrs. H. McCash
Mr. M. Smith	Mr. D. Stock

The Parish Council met eleven times on the third Tuesday of every month in the last Civic Year.

This decision was reviewed during the year and for the coming Civic Year the Parish Council will meet on the second Tuesday of every month except for the month of August.

The Parish Council operates three sub-committees. The Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee (chaired by Ian Knight) the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee (chaired by Denis Filer) and the Environment Sub-Committee (chaired by Christine Dinnin).

These sub-committees meet as and when necessary, discuss issues and make recommendations to the full Council.

The Parish Council made the following donations: £300 towards the cost of the Parish News, £65 to Royal British Legion, £25 to the River Beane Restoration Association, £100 to the Flower Festival and £75 to the Methodist Church Building Fund.

The Parish Council has awarded two trophies: one to the Watton at Stone Primary School for a 'Good Citizens Award', which was won by Rebekah Burton, and the other to the Scout and Guides for 'Outstanding Effort' which was won by Samuel Baudrey.

Parish Paths Partnership has allowed us to receive grant money for hedge cutting and strimming work, especially on the 'Rights of Way' footpaths.

The Parish Council has commented on the following documents:

- Consultation on Admission Arrangements for 2010/2011
- Foundation Trust Status for East and North Herts NHS Trust
- National Air Traffic Systems (NATS).

The Police visited the Parish Council during the Civic Year and gave Councillors an update on policing issues and crime figures related to the village.

A mobile Police Unit visits the village on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of every month and is parked in the lay-by opposite the Bull Public House.

Councillors have attended the following meetings:

- Inter Parish Conference held at Aston Village Hall
- Locality Policing Panel
- Hertfordshire Policing Plan 2008/2011
- Rural Neighbourhood Policing
- Benington Wind Farm Information Day at Benington and Aston.

On Watton Green, Encroaching shrubbery has been cut back around the perimeter of the green and a new fence has been installed.

On the Lammas, two trees that were overhanging the River Beane have been removed.

The Village Directory has been updated and delivered to every house in the village.

A working Party has been set up under the leadership of David Stock to design and develop a new web site for the village. This is well underway and will be on-line very soon.

The War Memorial has been cleaned.

A request has been sent to Hertfordshire Highways for a new salt bin in Rivershill and by the Watton Primary School.

Councillors met with officers from Hertfordshire Highways and discussed on-going highway issues; in particular with regards the state of Perrywood Lane and trees in Hazeldell.

The telephone number and e-mail address for the public to report Highway faults are 01438 737320 and www.hertsdirect.org/highwayfaults.

Our Asset Register was reviewed and updated.

A new laptop computer was purchased for council business.

A new Contract of Employment and job description, together with policies for Employee Disciplinary Procedure, and Staff Grievance Procedure for the Clerk have been approved.

The Parish Council has adopted the new model publication scheme under the Freedom of Information Act.

The Parish Council has representatives on local organisations so that we may assist in any ideas, projects or plans they might have. The list is as follows:

- Watton at Stone Memorial Hall Management Committee
- Watton at Stone School Governors
- Watton at Stone Scout and Guide Group
- Watton Sports and Social Club
- River Beane Restoration Association
- Police Authority
- Watton at Stone Pre-School Playgroup
- Allotment and Gardeners Association
- Watton Youth Drop Inn.

A file of press cuttings from 1976 to 1982 has been received from Mr. Alec Sandison the former Chairman of the Conservation Society; these are going to be archived.

New contracts have been awarded for 2009 to 2011 for grass cutting on the Lammas and Watton Green, and the High Street maintenance with leaf clearing, flower bed maintenance and mowing and strimming in and around the village.

A licence has been granted to Mr. and Mrs. Taylor, of Beane Cottage, to maintain a small parcel of land adjacent to their property.

Following a request from the Parish Council, East Herts Council has erected a new dog bin by Watton railway station.

It is the policy of the Parish Council to view all local plans and make appropriate planning comments to the local authority.

Two major planning applications were received this Civic Year which would affect the village.

1. Benington Wind Farm

The Parish Council held a Special Parish Council meeting on 14th July to discuss the proposed application for three wind turbines in Benington. Mr. Andrew Bott, the applicant and Mr. Julian Godlee, Stop Benington Wind Farm, addressed the Councillors and members of the public. Following that meeting Councillors wrote to East Herts Council strongly opposing these plans.

East Herts District Council Development Control at its meeting in January rejected this application following strong opposition from the Parish Council and the public.

2. Land South of Station Road

At the February meeting of Development Control meeting an application to develop the land on the south side of Station Road for housing, a Doctor's Surgery and an Early Years Learning Centre received approval.

Helen McCash has written and prepared a Major Incident Emergency Plan.

The Community Hall will be made available to the Watton Primary School, the Doctors Practice and Glebe Court in case of an emergency.

Finally, none of our work would have been possible without the assistance of our Clerk, Mrs. Jane Allsop, who has put in many hours beyond her normal duties and on behalf of all Parish Councillors I would like to say a big thank you to her for all her hard work.