

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 20th November 2007

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

Police: PCSO Paul Weston (until 1933)

Public: Mr. Paul Devne (until 2052)
Mrs. Pam Harrison (Clerk, Benington Parish Council)

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. Dinnin.

2 Public Participation

The meeting will close under item 7 a ii, Planning Applications – 16 Moorymead Close, to allow Paul Devne to speak about his planning application.

3 Declaration of Interests

Mr. Smith declared a pecuniary interest in the following items.

- Item 9 a, Community Hall - Damaged brick wall.
- Item 9 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Encroachment on Watton Green.

Mr. Harris declared a personal interest in item 7 a i, Planning application - 23 High Street.

4 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

Mr. Poulton welcomed the following people to the meeting.

- Paul Devne who will talk about his planning application under item 7 a ii.
- Pam Harrison, the new Clerk to Benington Parish Council, who was invited to see how Watton-at-Stone Parish Council runs its meetings.

Mr. Poulton said that it is not normal for members of the public to speak but if she had any questions to ask during the meeting, Parish Councillors would do what they could to answer them.

- PCSO Paul Weston will give the police report under item 5, in the absence of PC Andy Woodward.

Mr. Poulton had two additional urgent items for this meeting.

- **Code of Conduct Training**
The Clerk has informed all Parish Councillors the date on which they will attend the Code of Conduct training at East Herts Council.

- **Watton Village Guide**
Mr. Stock has given all of the Conservation Society's copies of the Village Guide to the Parish Council. They are available for sale at £1 per copy. A notice to this effect will be put in the January 2008 issue of Parish News.

The following item was put on the agenda in error.

- Budget and Finance Sub-Committee – Clerk's salary.

5 Report from P C Andy Woodward re policing matters

PCSO Paul Weston said that PC Andy Woodward gave his apologies for not being able to attend tonight due to a work commitment.

The crime figures for 1st January 2007 to 19th November 2007 are 74 reported crimes with 19 detections.

The figures for the same period in 2006 were 94 reported crimes with 25 detections.

- **Telephone box**
The red (listed) telephone box adjacent to the Bull public house car park was dragged from its foundations in the early hours of Guy-Fawkes night and in the process got completely destroyed. The police have a partial registration number of the vehicle involved.

It was agreed that the Parish Council writes to British Telecom asking them when we can expect a replacement, like-for-like, phone box to be installed.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Theft of lead from the Parish Church and Watton-at-Stone Primary School**

Lead from the Parish Church roof was removed. However, because the thieves were disturbed they left some of the lead behind. Mr. Knight said that more lead was stolen than was retrieved. Some information on the vehicle involved has been received together with a partial registration number. Lead was also removed from the school roof.

- **Speed radar-check at southern end of High Street**

PC Andy Woodward will do this when weather conditions are suitable.

- **Parking**

There remains a parking issue in the High Street due to a resident parking either outside their property or at the junction of Rivershill. Both situations result in a serious visibility problem for other drivers. The estate car often parks with all four wheels on the pavement and it makes exiting Rivershill very difficult and dangerous due to the obstruction it causes. Mr. Meischke said that it would be easier to see down the road if the car was parked against the wall at this location. PCSO Paul Weston said he would talk to PC Andy Woodward to see what can be done to resolve the situation.

In addition, Dominic Long (acting Headteacher at Watton-at-Stone Primary School) is trying to address the parking problems outside the school in Rectory Lane.

Mrs. McCash said that there is a parking problem caused by the occupants of two properties in Hazeldell parking on the pavement. Often the vehicles are parked so far onto the pavement that buggies and/or wheelchairs cannot pass without going into the road. PCSO Paul Weston agreed to visit Mrs. McCash to obtain the full details and investigate the problem accordingly.

- **Discuss problems with the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme**

Mrs. McCash said that she remains in despair about the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme crime-reporting system. She has been ignored by Jill Dockley (Hertfordshire Police) and reports from Watton-at-Stone are not being actioned nor are we receiving crime reports into this area. Mr. Poulton said that as a Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator he had not received any reports from Jill Dockley (Hertfordshire Police) for the past two months.

Mrs McCash said that if the situation does not get resolved, she will have no alternative but to close the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in the New Year.

PCSO Paul Weston left the meeting.

6 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 16th October 2007**

Mr. Stock 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

- **E-mail Mrs. Dinnin any items to be included in Parish Paths Partnership grant application**

None received.

- **Meet with the Countryside Management Service to complete the Parish Paths Partnership grant application:** completed.

Refer to item 9 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Parish Paths Partnership meeting re grant application.

- **Ask Mr. Dunhill for the name of the person who clears the footpath at the back of Watton Nursery**

It has now been ascertained that Mr. Dunhill is the person who cleared the footpath.

Refer to item 9 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Parish Paths Partnership meeting re grant application.

- **Inspect the gullies and report any blockages to Mr. Poulton**

A blocked gully in Perrywood Lane was reported by Mr. Filer. Mr. Poulton said that he will assume that all others gullies in the village are clear.

- **Report blocked gullies to Hertfordshire Highways**

Mr. Poulton to report the blocked gully in Perrywood Lane.

Action: N. Poulton

- **Write to planning department re retention of anemometer on land West of High Elms Lane, Benington:** completed.

- **Chase Doctor's surgery re shrubbery overhanging the Station Road**

Refer to item 8 a, Specific items - Overhanging foliage along the wall of the Doctor's Surgery garden.

- **Contact Scout and Guide Group re installing a dog-fouling notice on their land:** completed.

- **Ask two Stonemasons to quote for cleaning the War Memorial:** completed.

Refer to item 8 c, Specific items – War Memorial.

- **Purchase and plant additional shrubs required around the War Memorial:** completed.

Refer to item 8 c, Specific items – War Memorial.

- **Inform Mr. Filer of any items to be included in the 2008/09 budget**

Mr. Filer said that he had received a few requests from Parish Councillors. Refer to item 9 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee - Items for 2008/2009 Budget.

- **Complete and return Alliance & Leicester change-of-signature forms for the Parish Council accounts:** outstanding.

Mrs. Dinnin has signed the Alliance & Leicester change of signature forms.

The Clerk to arrange for all other signatories to sign the forms.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Obtain quotation from G. H. Attenborough & Co re annual audit of the Parish Council accounts:** outstanding.

Action: H. McCash

- **Obtain quotation from Wagstaff Chartered Accountants re annual audit of the Parish Council accounts**

Mr. Filer said that Wagstaff Chartered Accountants declined to quote.

- **Give Mr. Poulton the telephone number of the acoustics contact:** completed.

- **Arrange a meeting with the Community Hall Trustees and the acoustic contractor**

Refer to item 9 a Community Hall Trustees – Acoustics.

- **Look at the feasibility and cost of installing a CCTV system at the Community Hall**

Mr. Meischke said he had obtained two quotations for CCTV systems.

This item to be discussed at the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee meeting on 26th November.

- **Update the list of estimated long-term capital expenditures items:** completed.

Refer to item 9 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee – Long-term capital expenditure forecast.

- **Look at the damage to car-park wall to access what needs to be done**

Refer to item 9 a Community Hall Trustees - Damaged brick wall.

- **Submit article to Hertfordshire Mercury re vandalism at Community Hall:** completed.

- **Chase Mr. Bradford for the tree costings for the Cottage Site:** completed.

Mr. Bradford informed Mrs. Dinnin that the trees would cost in the region of £95.

- **Re-fix footpath notice in Mill Lane to its post:** outstanding.

Mr. Meischke needs to obtain some tough plastic to complete the job.

Action: J. Meischke

- **Remove all of the white and yellow lining and re-lay new badminton court lining in Main Hall**

Refer to item 9 a Community Hall Trustees - White and yellow lining in Main Hall.

- **Clean the store cupboard in the Main Hall:** completed.

- **Ask Rosemary Brown to remove all the cobwebs in the Community Hall:** completed.

- **Remove items from Community Hall roof:** completed.

- **Write to Mr. Smith at HCC re reasons for cancellation of improvements on the A602:** completed.

- **Give the Clerk preferred dates and times for the Code of Conduct training sessions:** completed

- **Give the Parish Councillor's preferred and reserve dates to Jeff Hughes (East Herts Council):** completed.

c) Action points outstanding for more than two months

- **Contact Mr. and Mrs. Aknai re items to be included in the Parish Paths Partnership grant application:** outstanding.

Mr. Stock said that he would pursue this action point for Mrs. Dinnin in her absence. **Action: D. Stock**

- **Give the Clerk the numbers of the allotments affected by the installation of rabbit fencing**

Mr. Meischke said that the installation of the rabbit fencing may not affect any of the allotment holders and therefore it will not be necessary to write to them.

- **Write to allotment holders affected by installation of rabbit fencing**

Refer item above.

- **Speak to Allotment and Garden Association re strimmer:** outstanding.

7 Planning

a) Applications

i) 23 High Street (3/07/1979/FP/SD)

New front porch

Mr. Poulton said that he dealt with this application because the closest councillor, Mr. Harris, lives opposite the applicants.

Mr. Poulton visited the neighbouring residents and they had no problem with the application.

Mr. Poulton discussed the application with Mr. Stock and then instructed the Clerk to write to the Planning Department stating that the Parish Council had no comment on this application.

Parish Councillors agreed with the decision.

ii) 16, Moorymead Close (3/07/2342/FP/HS)

Conversion of garage to living accommodation

Mr. Poulton read out the planning decision to refuse the previous application (3/06/2274/LB/SD) at 16 Moorymead Close.

‘The loss of a parking space within this small cul-de-sac is likely to lead to increased parking either on-street or on the frontage of the site. If permitted, the proposal would create a precedent for other similar developments within the cul-de-sac leading to further deterioration in the appearance of the locality and the visual amenities of neighbouring residents, contrary to the aims and objectives of policy ENV9 of the East Hertfordshire Local Plan Second Review April 2007.’

- The meeting closed to allow Paul Divine, the applicant, to present his modified planning application.
- The meeting opened again.

The above application includes an increased-size driveway to allow up to three vehicles to be parked off-road.

Parish Councillors discussed the application and its policy to oppose garages being converted into living spaces.

Mr. Poulton asked Parish Councillors to vote on this application and the results were as follows.

- Three Parish Councillors had no comment on the above application
- Five Parish Councillors objected to the above application in accordance with the Parish Council’s policy on such applications.

Mr. Poulton took no part in the voting.

It was agreed to write and inform East Herts Council that the Parish Council objects to the principal of a garage being converted into living accommodation. Also, the proposed development would ultimately lead to an increase in on-street parking.

Action: J. Allsop

Paul Devne left the meeting.

iii) 117-119, High Street (3/07/2291/FP/HS)

Conversion of detached garage into a single one bedroom residential unit.

Mr. Meischke said that he had visited the residents who opposed to the previous application (submitted in June 2006) to convert the three detached garages into two dwellings.

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter (dated 18th November) from Valerie and Terry Crane of 55 Rivershill.

‘We have looked at the plans for the above and am concerned from what we see that there are **four car spaces marked out, three of which are alongside our garden. If these are approved they should be kept in close proximity to the one bedroom residential unit as positioned on the proposed plans** – more traffic and noise introduced in this area will however transpire. As this is a “communal” garden in question we would not like to see this area for further car parking or cars turning.

Regarding the new proposed height of the building i.e. single storey, we see no reason to oppose the new suggested building **but** will keep an eye on it to see it is strictly as per the plans put forward and that no windows will face our property.’

Councillors looked at the plans and agreed to write to East Herts Council informing them that the Parish Council objects to the above application for the following reasons.

- It is an over-development of site.
- The Parish Council is concerned about traffic movement in this area especially with ingress and egress onto the High Street.
- The Parish Council objects to the change of use from three garages to a residential unit.

Action: J. Allsop

b) Decisions

i) 15 Lammas Road (3/07/1705/FP/SD)

Amendment to approved schemed 3/06/1475/FP to extend single storey extension 3.6m to the front with a reduced roof pitch from 28 degrees to 15 degrees -East Herts Council permission granted

ii) The Old Chapel, Whempstead (3/07/1462/FP/NB)

Change of use from garage/study to separate dwelling unit (retrospective) -East Herts Council permission refused

8 Specific items

a) Overhanging foliage along the wall of the Doctor's Surgery garden

Mrs. McCash said that foliage will be cut back when repairs are done to the wall in the next two to three weeks. This item to remain on the agenda until the foliage has been cut back

Agenda: 12/07

b) Watton-at-Stone website

Parish Councillors discussed the Watton-at-Stone website directly after the Parish Council meeting held on 16th October. The following letter was then sent to former Parish Councillor Vernon Dunhill.

‘Firstly, I want you to know that the Parish Council thanks you for all the work you have done with its web site over the years.

However, and for reasons I am sure you can appreciate, now that you are no longer a Councillor it is felt that the web site must be under the ownership and control of the Parish Council itself. To this end, I would appreciate it if you could arrange for the web site to be transferred from your name into that of the Parish Council at the Council Offices, 9 Beane Road. Obviously, we will pay for all costs involved in the transfer. Once transferred, we will arrange for the web site to be hosted on a new server.

Please contact Jane when you have arranged the transfer to give her any necessary passwords to the site.

Thanks once again for all your efforts in setting up and maintaining the Watton-at-Stone web, they are much appreciated.’

Mr. Poulton thanked Mr. Stock for his excellent input to this letter.

Mr. Poulton said that we have received a very nice response from Vernon Dunhill and the Clerk will liaise with him over the transfer of the website.

c) War Memorial

- **Planting around the War Memorial**

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Stock have purchased and planted the new shrubs. It was agreed that the site now looks very good.

- **Cleaning the War Memorial and surrounding path**

Quotations have been received from S. C. Dass and Hugh McAlpine for the cleaning of the War Memorial. These quotations will be discussed during the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee meeting on 26th November.

9 Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

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

- **Monthly accounts**

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash

Receipts

B. Thurlow - Allotment rent 2007/08
Sarah Cullen - Allotment rent 2007/08

	Payments
	None
	<u>16.00</u>
	<u>48.00</u>

Cheques required

Withers Thomas	Land valuation - Parish Council land at Rivershill	293.75
T. Brown	Trim back overgrowth at allotment entrance	20.00
T. Brown	32 hours litterpick	224.00
Watton Nursery	Plants for War Memorial garden	83.00
BSWW Parish News	Village Directory - photocopying and delivery charges	43.00
Earl Haig	Poppy donation	65.00
HCC	Lighting energy – 1/7/07 – 30/09/07	148.79
HCC	Lighting maintenance – 1/7/07 – 30/09/07	198.35
Frank Cooper and Son Limited	October grass cut	43.47
Fred Burnell	Remove wasps nest from the Lammas	37.60
N. J. Whitehead	Sportsfield hedge cut	387.75
J. Allsop	November salary	579.63
Grassroots	Leaf clearance work	<u>200.00</u>
		<u>2324.34</u>

Cheques received

HM Paymaster General	Stewardship scheme grant for the Lammas – final payment	343.65
John Love	Allotment rent 2007/08	40.00
Jill Lomas	Allotment rent 2007/08	8.00
Michael Freeman	Allotment rent 2007/08	40.00
Nicki Smith	Allotment rent 2007/08	8.00
John Hodges	Allotment rent 2007/08	16.00
Thomas Best	Allotment rent 2007/08	16.00
Jim Hall	Allotment rent 2007/08	16.00
David Wilkinson	Allotment rent 2007/08	8.00
Mr. & Mrs. Beatty	Allotment rent 2007/08	8.00
Terrance Hankin	Allotment rent 2007/08	16.00
		<u>519.65</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash

Receipts

Floodlighting to 16.10.07	92.00
Jim Keen – Main hall hire	80.00
Watton Dots & Tots – Pavilion hire	56.00
Gill Gilbey - Main Hall	<u>20.00</u>
	<u>248.00</u>

Payments

K. S. Burgess – replace faulty switch	30.00
VAT return 09/07	23.20
2008 Diary	1.50
HCC – cleaning materials	<u>10.87</u>
	<u>65.57</u>

Cheques required

Rosemary Brown	16 hours cleaning	104.00
James Tuner	Boiler service	211.50
Stevenage Glass	Replace 4 double-glazed windows	420.65
Ernest Doe	Leaf blower	210.00
BSWW Parish News	2008 annual charge for Community Hall advert	<u>110.00</u>
		<u>1056.15</u>

Cheques received

Dave Boddy	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	337.95
L. Jeffs	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	39.00
Louisa Bailey	Main Hall hire	99.00
Conservation Association	Pavilion room hire	40.00
Mrs. Robinson	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	<u>48.00</u>
		<u>563.95</u>

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

• **Items for 2008/2009 Budget**

The Budget and Finance Sub-Committee will meet on Monday 26th November, at 1600, in the Community Hall to discuss the draft budget for 2008/09.

Mr. Filer said that he and the Clerk had reviewed each item and compared the figures to those already spent this year and in previous years. A similar process will be repeated during the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee meeting and alterations made where necessary.

Mr. Filer will present his draft 2008/09 budgets for approval by the Parish Council during its December meeting.

The Clerk to give a copy of the draft budgets to all Parish Councillors prior to the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee.

Action: J. Allsop

• **Long-term capital expenditure forecast**

Mr. Poulton handed out copies of the list of estimated long-term capital expenditure items which he has updated.

For the benefit of Mr. Harris, he then explained the reason why we produce a list of long-term capital expenditure items. If a member of public challenged the amount of money the Parish Council held in reserve, we would be able to justify our actions.

Mr. Filer said that in the business-world it is normal to keep approximately eight months expenditure in reserve and that the Parish Council and Community Hall reserves fall below this figure.

• **Review insurance policies**

The current Parish Council and Community Hall insurer is Allianz. However, the Community Hall insurance policy is taken out via AON Limited.

Mr. Filer has obtained an application form for Zurich who would provide cover for the Community Hall but currently doesn't handle Parish Council policies (although they are thinking about doing so in the future).

It was agreed to complete and return the Zurich application form and also to look for additional alternative quotations for insurance.

Action: N. Poulton/J. Allsop

- **Stop Stansted campaign**

The Stop Stansted campaign has asked for a donation towards its fight to stop a second runway being built. It is not the Parish Council's policy to support such groups.

Community Hall Trustees

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

- **Damaged brick wall**

Mr. Smith declared a pecuniary interest in this item.

The car-park brick wall is damaged at the gate-end and needs repairing as soon as possible.

Mr. Smith said he had inspected the wall and in his opinion the gate should be hung from a new metal post independent of the wall. The wall should then be built up to the new gate post.

A quotation of £480 (including VAT and materials) has been obtained from Corbett Brickworks to rebuild the wall from the existing brickwork up to the new gate post.

For safety reasons, it was agreed that Mr. Smith removes the damaged section of brick wall as soon as possible and install a new metal gate-post. Mr. Smith said that the work would be less than £100.

Action: M. Smith

It was agreed to accept Corbett Brickworks quotation to repair the brick wall.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Bench seat on Sportsfield**

Mr. and Mrs. Milman (37 Rivershill) have chosen the site for the memorial seat in memory of their son. Mr. Poulton and Mr. Knight were with them when they chose the location on the sportsfield, which is between the two evergreen trees and with a view over the sportsfield. The cost of the Memorial seat and its installation will be paid for by Mr. and Mrs. Milman.

- **Acoustics**

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Stock had a meeting with Mr. Eddie Turner of Prism Displays to discuss the acoustics in the Community Hall.

Mr. Stock outlined the discussions that took place about the options available and the costs involved.

As an experiment, Eddie Turner has agreed to supply some free-standing panels (at no cost) to see what effect they would have on the acoustic problem in the Main Hall. Mr. Stock said that before any financial commitment is made, all Parish Councillors needed to be confident that installing acoustic panels would ease the acoustic problems in the Main Hall.

- **Internal decorations**

Mr. Poulton has instructed Bob Adams to paint the section of wall and skirting board under the hatch in the Pavilion and paint the small wooden seat on the multi-purpose play equipment.

- **White and yellow lining in Main Hall**

Mr. Poulton thanked Mr. and Mrs. Stock, Mr. Dunhill and Mrs. Freeman for removing the yellow-lining in the Main Hall.

Mr. Stock said that he and Mr. Dunhill will remove the white lining when we have the new tape.

Mr. Poulton agreed to find where we can get the new Badminton Court tape from and how much it costs.

Action: N. Poulton

Recreation & Amenities

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

- **Sportsfield development - outcome of meeting held on 20th November**

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Knight met this afternoon with representatives of the Glebe Committee and they were sympathetic and supportive of the plans to provide additional football facilities for the village.

The Glebe Committee representative's will present the plans to the full Glebe Committee and inform the Parish Council of their decision early in the New Year.

- **Purchase of leaf blower**

The Tennis Club requested that the Community Hall Trustees purchase a leaf blower for use on the MPPA at a cost of £210 including VAT. This was approved by several members of the Parish Council via e-mail.

Mr. Harris offered to donate his leaf-blower, free of charge. Mr. Knight said that he had already given Doe Sport a cheque for the full amount, written out on the Community Hall account, but he would see if he could cancel the order.

Action: I. Knight

Environment

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

- **Parish Paths Partnership (P3) meeting re grant application**

On 25th October Mrs. Dinnin and Mr. Poulton met with Fiona Annal of the Countryside Management Service and Tom Goldsmith (Footpath Officer for Hertfordshire County Council).

In addition to the usual items covered under the P3 grant application, footpath 11 will now be included. This footpath runs along the river Beane at the back of Watton Nursery. The Parish Council will take over the cutting back of Footpath 18 from Church Walk to Church Lane (which Mr. Dunhill used to cut back).

- **Watton Green**

Mr. Smith declared a pecuniary interest in this item and left the meeting.

Blue Bury Contractors have provided a quotation of £650 (plus VAT) as follows.

‘Cut back to tree/ditch line scrub encroachment of grassland.

Remove from site any distressed timber.

Cut back trees and remove branches for future scrub control.’

At the Parish Council meeting in November, Adam Welch’s quotation for the following work was discussed.

- Clear undergrowth to a height of one meter back to the tree-line/ditch as discussed and chip materials £1900
- If interested I could also burn the waste (either on currently burnt spots or other suitable spot that would be concealed afterwards) £1500

Mrs. McCash proposed that we accept Blue Bury Contractors’ quotation and instruct Mr. Smith to do the work as soon as possible. Mr. Stock seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Mr. Smith to be informed accordingly.

Action: N. Poulton

A permanent lockable-access is needed to allow contractor’s machinery onto Watton Green. The barrier at the bottom of Church Walk could be relocated to Watton Green rather than purchase and install a new one.

Blue Bury Contractors have quoted £175 (plus VAT) to remove the barrier from Church Walk, make good any holes and relocate it on Watton Green.

Mrs. McCash proposed that we accept Blue Bury Contractors’ quotation and instruct Mr. Smith to do the work as soon as possible. Mr. Stock seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Mr. Smith to be informed accordingly.

Action: N. Poulton

Mr. Smith returned to the meeting.

Mr. Stock said we need to have a five-year maintenance plan for Watton Green to ensure that the land does not suffer further encroachment. He felt that if the ground-level cutting was done consistently during the grass-cutting sessions this would control encroachment. The five-year maintenance plan would mainly be associated with pruning trees and shrubs on the boundary of Watton Green to stop any further encroachment onto the green. Mr. Smith agreed with this.

- **Hedge opposite Community Hall wall**

The Abel Smith estate hedge opposite the Community Hall needs cutting back. Mr. Harris said in Law it is the responsibility of the tenant to keep the hedge trimmed back. If the tenant does not do so, then the responsibility becomes that of the owner.

Mr. Filer agreed to speak to Mr. Abel Smith about the problem next time he sees him.

Action: D. Filer

- **Tree Planting on Cottage Site**

Tony Bradford has told Mrs. Dinnin that the trees required for the Cottage Site will cost approximately £90.

- **Lammas - Nettles**

Because we are no longer under the Stewardship agreement, we can treat the nettles on the Lammas ourselves under a kill/cut/remove scheme. Tony Bradford suggested the use of Tumbleweed or Roundup. However, Mr. Smith said this was far too strong.

It was agreed that Mr. Smith provide a quotation for the treatment of the nettles on the Lammas for spring 2008.

Action: M. Smith

b) Routine reports

i) Fire-alarm test

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

ii) Monthly village-report

Mr. Smith completed this report on the 20th November 2007, the result of which is as follows.

- **Sportsfield:**

Condition of grass	Good.
Litter	OK.
Dog fouling	None.
General	Moles by teen shelter.
- **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	Good.
- **Bike ramps area:**

Junior Jump	OK.
Double Ramp	OK.
Fun Box	OK.
- **Community Hall:**

General Condition (Exterior)	Mud/broken floodlight.
Litterbin	OK.
Car Park	OK.
General	Wall and gate.
- **Multi-Purpose Play Area:**

Surface	OK.
Boundary Fencing	OK.
Tennis nets	OK.
Litter	OK.
General	Good.
- **Great Innings Play Area:**

Equipment	OK. – Roundabout iffy?
Surfaces	OK.
Litter	OK.
Dog fouling	OK.
Trees	OK.
Comments	Holes dug out?
- **Allotments Area:**

Access	OK.
Condition of paths between Allotments	OK.
Condition of Allotments under cultivation	OK.
Condition of Allotments not under cultivation	Some very overgrown.
Litter	OK.
Comments	OK.
- **Culverts on Mill Lane**

Litter and rubbish in and around Culverts	OK.
Dog-fouling	OK.
Comments	Overgrown.
- **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	OK.

- **Dog-waste bins**

Footpath 17	Full.
Sportsfield	OK.
Church Walk	OK.
Walkern Road	No lid.
Station Road	OK.
High Street (by Memorial)	OK.
Great Innings	OK.
Mill Lane	OK. – Litterbin overflowing.
Opposite 5 School Lane	OK.

War Memorial
 Comments Very good (paving could be cleaned).

Ornate Village Sign
 Comments OK.
 Post OK.
- **Mole on sportsfield**
 It was agreed to ask Fred Burnell to deal with the Mole problem on the sportsfield. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Holes in ground behind goal posts**
 Several squares of turf have been dug out from behind the goal adjacent to the footpath on the Great Innings play area. It was agreed to e-mail Trevor Waldock (East Herts Council) asking him to inspect the site and replace the missing turf. **Action: J. Allsop**
- iii) **Weekly sportsfield-report and action**
 The only item to report from Ted Brown’s weekly inspections is graffiti on the see-saw, which Mr. Poulton has removed.

10 Correspondence received

a) East Herts Council – Consultation on planning applications

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter from Paul Burt (Business Manager, Development Control, East Herts Council) which was e-mailed to all Parish Councillors on 22nd October.

‘Re: Consultations on Planning Applications

Local authorities, as part of the e-government process, are being asked to increase the amount of consultations made and received by electronic means. This does avoid delays/losses through the postal services thus speeding up the process and reduces the use of paper and storage space for local authorities and consultees. Local planning authorities will also no longer be able to request multiple copies of application documents and plans to enable consultations in hard copy form.

All our planning applications are scanned within 3 working days of validations. We will soon be in a position to e-mail consultees with a link to view documents via the internet.

Please can you advise us, by completing and returning the details below, if you are in a position to received and respond to consultations by e-mail and view documents via the web?’

On request, Paul Burt e-mailed the Clerk copies of electronic examples of two planning applications, which were then e-mailed to all Parish Councillors.

Mr. Poulton said that there were mixed responses from Parish Councillors, with half agreeing it was a good idea and the other half not.

Mr. Poulton said that he had spoken with Paul Burt who had informed him that it was only a matter of time before the Parish Council would have no choice but to receive planning applications electronically.

Printed copies of the electronic examples were studied by Parish Councillors and it was agreed to write to Paul Burt accepting the electronic version. **Action: J. Allsop**

b) Oliver Heald MP re A602

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter (dated 2nd November) from Oliver Heald.

‘Further to my letter of 26th October, I have now seen a copy of the reply you have received from Rob Smith at Hertfordshire County Council.

It is very disappointing that the improvements to the A602 had to be withdrawn this year, but does seem that the County Council are hoping to proceed as soon as funding is secure.’

c) Rodney Ranzetta, BSWW Parish News

Mr. Poulton read out a letter from Rodney Ranzetta thanking the Parish Council for its kind donation of £300 towards the running costs of the BSWW Parish News.

11 Reports from other Organisations

- **Watton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association**

The Clerk said that only one allotment holder had not paid their 2007/08 rent. A reminder to be sent accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**

The Allotment and Garden Association is writing an article for the Parish News about the history of the allotments and an explanation of the role of the Association.

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

Mrs. McCash said that at a recent meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Memorial Hall Management Committee, concern was raised over the high electricity bills and the Committee are exploring ways of reducing the heating costs.

- **Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Watch**

Refer to item 5, Specific items - Report from P C Andy Woodwood re policing matters.

- **Watton-at-Stone Pre-School Playgroup:** Nothing to report.

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

Mr. Clark said that portacabins are due to arrive this week for use by the office staff during the building works for the Children's Centre. Work to install and fit them out will start next week. When the work commences access to the school via the main entrance will be limited and all visitors will need to report to the School office in the temporary accommodation.

The new Children's Centre and Extended Schools Manager, Lif Bishop, took up her post in September 2007. Lif Bishop recently gave a presentation to the Watton-at-Stone School Governors about the work done at the Children's Centre. She is also to give a presentation to Parish Councillors during the December meeting.

The new Headteacher will start in January 2008.

- **Whempstead**

Mr. Clark said that another serious road-accident had occurred at the Whempstead crossroads.

- **Watton-at-Stone Scout & Guide Group:** Nothing to report.

- **Watton-at-Stone Sports & Social Club:** Nothing to report.

- **Watton Youth Drop Inn:** Nothing to report.

- **Police Authority:** Nothing to report.

- **River Beane Restoration Association**

Mr. Knight said that he had removed the two Go East letters from circulation so that he could draft a reply from the Parish Council. **Action: I. Knight**

It would appear that Go East is finally taking on board the supply of water in the East of England plan.

12 Items for Parish News

Mr. Poulton said that he did not identify any items for inclusion in the December issue of the Parish News.

Mr. Stock to write an entry about the Watton-at-Stone Village Guide for the January 2008 issue of the Parish News. **Action: D. Stock**

- **'Exclusion of press and public' minute**

Mr. Harris asked if Parish Councillors would be receiving a separate minute on the Exclusion of Press and Public item discussed during the November Parish Council meeting. The Clerk said that she was in the process of doing this. It was agreed that the minute be printed on yellow paper. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **The meeting closed at 2100.**

- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 18th December 2007.**