

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 16th October 2007

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

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Clark.

2 Public Participation

None.

3 Declaration of Interests

Mr. Smith declared a pecuniary interest in item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Encroachment on Watton Green.

4 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

Mr. Poulton had one additional urgent item for this meeting and one item to be taken under 'Exclusion of Press and Public'.

- **Broken windows at the Community Hall**

This item to be discussed under 8 a - Community Hall Trustees.

- **'Exclusion of Press and Public'**

The Parish Council agreed a movement under Section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of item 9d, Correspondence received - Letter from Mr. Alan Thomas of Withers Thomas re Parish Council land at Rivershill, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of part 1 of schedule 12A of the said Act of the following description: Information relating to a financial negotiation.

5 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 18th September 2007**

Mrs. McCash proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

Mr. Meischke seconded the motion and all present at that meeting were in favour.

b) Review of actions

- **Write to Trevor Waldock re purchase of dog-waste bins and hand-deliver the letter:** completed.

Three new bins have now been installed.

- **Write to planning department re the Old Chapel Whempstead:** completed.

Refer to item 9 b Correspondence received - Letters re retrospective planning application for the Old Chapel, Whempstead.

- **Write to planning department re two applications for Heathmount school:** completed

- **Write to HCC re cancellation of improvements to the A602:** completed.

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

Refer to item 9 c Correspondence received - Letter from Mr. Smith (Assistant Director, Transport Management, HCC) re cancellation of improvements to the A602.

- **Write to Hertfordshire Highways re salt-bins notice:** completed.

The following text from Hertfordshire Highways will be published in the November issue of the Parish News.

'Cold comfort from Hertfordshire Highways

With the cold weather coming, Hertfordshire Highways is reminding residents that they can feel free to salt footways and roads using council-supplied salt bins. The county council provides 800 salt bins across the county at known trouble spots off the main salting route and householders can help themselves for use on footpaths and the highway. The authority asks only that residents do not use the salt on their private driveway or path.

Hertfordshire Highways carries out salting in a priority order in accordance with importance of the road. On every salting trip we cover nearly half of Hertfordshire's entire road network – over 1,500 miles (2,200km). This is the equivalent of salting the roads from Lands End to John O'Groat's and back!

The council's team works closely with weather forecasters to ensure that changes are constantly monitored to ensure appropriate action is taken.

In addition, 10 roadside weather-reporting stations throughout the county relay information through computer links about road conditions. Hertfordshire Highways try to complete salting outside peak traffic time and before freezing conditions occur.'

- **Look at the annual Parish Council audit rules and regulations (re cheaper alternative audits)**
Refer to item 8a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee.
- **Sign and return COIF fund application-forms**
Refer to item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee - Bank signatories on COIF fund account and the Alliance and Leicester accounts.
- **Contact Alliance and Leicester re banking forms**
Refer to item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee - Bank signatories on COIF fund account and the Alliance and Leicester accounts.
- **Contact the Reverend Robinson (Chairman of the Glebe Committee for the Diocese of St Albans)**
Refer to item 8 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee – sportsfield development.
- **Get one additional key cut for the external store:** completed.
The Tennis Club has sent a donation of £15 to cover the cost of cutting the key.
- **Give Mr. Knight a copy of the keys to the Ladies toilet so that he can make additional copies**
Mr. Knight had three keys cut.
Mr. Poulton said that we need to ensure that the people who are issued with keys to the external toilets lock them after use. He found one of the external toilet doors wide open on a Saturday evening and nobody was around.
- **Visit Watton Green to determine the extent of encroachment**
Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Encroachment on Watton Green.
- **Contact Fred Burnell asking him to remove wasps nest on the Lammas:** completed.
- **Chase Mr. Bradford for the tree costings for the Cottage Site**
Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Tree planting on the Cottage Site.
- **E-mail Mrs. Dinnin any items to be included in the Parish Paths Partnership grant application**
Mrs. Dinnin said that she had not received any items from Parish Councillors to date. She and Mr. Poulton are meeting with the Countryside Management Service on Thursday 25th October to complete the Parish Paths Partnership grant application and therefore Parish Councillors will need to e-mail any items to Mrs. Dinnin before that date. **Action: Parish Councillors/N. Poulton/C. Dinnin**
- **Contact Mr. and Mrs. Aknai re items to be included in the Parish Paths Partnership grant application**
Mrs. Dinnin has been unsuccessful in contacting Mr and Mrs. Aknai, but will continue to try and make contact. **Action: C. Dinnin**
- **Speak to the local man who clears the footpath at the back of Watton Nursery**
Mrs. Dinnin said that she needs to get the name of this person from Vernon Dunhill. **Action: C. Dinnin**
- **Contact East Herts Council re slide at the Great Innings play area:** completed.
- **E-mail Raj Goutam requesting that the broken lids are replaced on two salt bins:** completed.
- **Inspect the War Memorial to access its condition**
Refer to item 7 d, Specific items - War Memorial.
- **Put Aston Parish Council's letter and attachments on circulation:** completed.
Refer to item 9 a, Correspondence received - Aston Parish Council – Wind Turbines.
- **Give the Clerk the numbers of the allotments affected by the installation of rabbit fencing**
Mr. Meischke said that he needs to get this information from Phil Moore (Chairman of the Allotment and Garden Association). **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Write to allotment holders affected by installation of rabbit fencing**
This action will be completed when Mr. Meischke has given the Clerk the numbers of the allotment holders affected. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Speak to Allotment and Garden Association re strimmer:** outstanding. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Speak to Watton-at-Stone Pre-School Playgroup about meeting date clashes**
Mrs. Dinnin said there had been a misunderstanding, the Parish Council meeting dates do not clash with the Watton-at-Stone Pre-School Playgroup meetings.
- **Speak to Hertfordshire Highways re blocked drain in Perrywood Lane**
Mr. Poulton e-mailed Hertfordshire Highways and during the last two weeks they have been clearing the gullies in the village.
Mr. Filer said that the gully in Perrywood Lane remains blocked and is overflowing down the road.

Mr. Poulton asked all Parish Councillors to inspect the gullies in their area and if any are blocked, to e-mail him accordingly so that he can inform Hertfordshire Highways.

Action: Parish Councillors/N. Poulton

- **Look at the copy of the Land Registry for the Parish Council land at Rivershill**
Refer to item 9 d, Correspondence received - Letter from Mr. Alan Thomas of Withers Thomas re Parish Council land at Rivershill.
- **Instruct Mr. Thomas to value the Parish Council land at Rivershill**
Refer to item 9 d, Correspondence received - Letter from Mr. Alan Thomas of Withers Thomas re Parish Council land at Rivershill.
- **Review October agenda and highlight any items to be included in the Parish News**
Refer to item 11, Items for Parish News.

c) Action points outstanding for more than two months

None.

6 Planning

a) Applications

i) Land West of High Elms Lane, Benington

Retention of 50m anemometer until 16/03/08 (amendment of pervious permission: 3/06/2250/FP)

Mr. Poulton said that the original application for the anemometer was granted in January 2007.

However, it was approximately 6 to 8 weeks after permission was granted that the anemometer was installed. The planning department require twelve months of data from the anemometer before they will consider an application to install Wind Turbines.

Parish Councillors discussed the application and agreed to write to East Herts Council informing them that the Parish Council has no comment on this application.

Action: J. Allsop

b) Decisions

i) 14 Hazeldell (3/07/1589/FP/JS)

Single storey ground floor front and rear extension

-East Herts Council permission refused

7 Specific items

a) Overhanging foliage along the wall of the Doctors' Surgery garden

The Clerk said that she had misunderstood where the foliage was overhanging and had written on 13th September asking for the growth overhanging the Station Road footpath to be cut back. In fact the problem at that time was with the High Street section of the wall.

However, Parish Councillors agreed that the shrubbery overhanging the Station Road section also needed to be cut back. Mrs. McCash said that she is pursuing this matter.

Action: H. McCash

b) Visit by Beane Valley Children's Centre

Mr. Poulton said that Lif Bishop (Watton Primary and Nursery School's new Beane Valley Children's Centre and Extended Schools Manager) was unable to attend our meeting tonight as she felt that it was too soon after she had taken up the post.

However, she has agreed to attend the Parish Council meeting in December.

c) Dog sign

Mr. Harris said he attended the Scout and Guide Group meeting held on 19th September. He introduced himself to the committee and explained that his job was to act as a co-ordinator between the group and the Parish Council. During discussions, two items were raised.

• **Proposed wind farm**

Mr. Harris informed the Scout and Guide Group that the Parish Council could not comment formally on the proposed Wind Farm at Benington until a planning application is submitted and the plans have been discussed.

• **Dog fouling on the Scout and Guide site**

Mr. Harris explained that there were funds available to install a dog-bin, which could be sited near the gate at the entrance to the field adjoining the Scout and Guides hut.

Following discussions after Mr. Harris had left the meeting, the committee agreed that a bin would suggest the acceptance of dog-walking on the field, which is not the case. It was agreed to ask the Parish Council to fund a notice informing the public that the land is private property and that dogs are not allowed on it.

The Parish Council agreed that they had no objection to the Scout and Guide Group purchasing and installing a notice on their land. Mr. Harris to notify them.

Action: I. Harris

d) War Memorial

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Stock inspected the War Memorial and surrounding area with the following results.

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

The whole of the War Memorial needs cleaning to keep it in the best possible condition. Also, it would be worthwhile to have the paving surrounding the Memorial cleaned at the same time.

It was agreed to ask the Stonemasons who submitted quotations in 2003 to do so again, namely: Hugh McAlpine and S. C. Dass **Action : J. Allsop**

In 2003, we accepted Mr. Dass's quotation of £780 for cleaning the War Memorial and surrounding paving stones. Hugh McAlpine quoted £1,700 to do the work. The Church provided the water supply to enable the work to be done.

- **Planting around the War Memorial**

Some additional planting is needed in the War Memorial garden to fill in the gaps in the hedge and some open spaces. Mr. Poulton and Mr. Stock discussed this with Major Shepherd who said that he can supply the necessary plants and shrubs for £83. This expenditure was agreed by Parish Councillors and therefore Mr. Poulton and Mr. Stock to arrange a date on which to do the planting. **Action: N. Poulton/D. Stock**

Grassroots have been instructed to trim the berberis hedge and generally tidy the garden before Remembrance Sunday (11th November).

8 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

None

Payments

None

Cheques required

St. Albans Diocesan Board	MPPA Glebe rent	90.00
Ted Brown	Strimming and weeding around sportsfield and Community Hall	85.00
Ted Brown	24 hours litterpicking	168.00
J. Allsop	Phone charges to 3 August, 3 September and 3 October	54.75
J. Allsop	September salary	579.63
Community Hall	½ year grant	3342.50
BSWW Parish News	Annual grant	300.00
Frank Cooper and Son Limited	September grass cut	130.42
Inland Revenue	Tax and NI	186.51
Grassroots	Flowerbed maintenance	293.75
Greenwood Tree Care	Ten village grass/trimming cuts	<u>1750.00</u>
		<u>6980.56</u>

Cheques received

Mr. Roger Green	Allotment rent 2007/08	16.00
Mr. J. Knight	Allotment rent 2007/08	32.00
Phil Moore	Allotment rent 2007/08	16.00
Carla Blunt	Allotment rent 2007/08	8.00
Matthew Wood	Allotment rent 2007/08	8.00
Muriel Haig-Smith	Allotment rent 2007/08	16.00
Cheryl Gibbings	Allotment rent 2007/08	16.00
Mr. Michael Inman	Allotment rent 2007/08	48.00
Alan Tucker	Allotment rent 2007/08	16.00
Mr. D. Wolf	Allotment rent 2007/08	8.00
Ian Falconer	Allotment rent 2007/08	16.00
Pat Hawkins	Allotment rent 2007/08	16.00
Mr. John Bunyan	Allotment rent 2007/08	8.00
Gavin Dixon	Allotment rent 2007/08	8.00
Mrs Roma Hawkins	Allotment rent 2007/08	8.00
Wayne Simpson	Allotment rent 2007/08	8.00
Mary and John Phillips	Allotment rent 2007/08	<u>24.00</u>
		<u>272.00</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash

Receipts		Payments	
Floodlighting to 02.10.07	182.00	John Phillips - opening toilets 6.9.07 - 16.10.07	<u>41.00</u>
Jim Keen – Main hall hire	60.00		<u>41.00</u>
Watton Dots & Tots – Pavilion hire	56.00		
Dawn Aldridge - Main Hall & Pavilion	48.00		
Mrs. Rawlinson - Main Hall & Pavilion	40.00		
Gill Gilbey - Main Hall	10.00		
Anna Pattle – Main Hall hire	8.00		
	<u>404.00</u>		

Cheques required

Gary Smith	Window cleaning	56.00
K. S. Burgess	Annual electrical inspection	110.00
Rosemary Brown	26 hours cleaning	169.00
H. M Customs & Excise	VAT return	87.73
Robert Adams	External decoration	240.00
Doe Sport	Moss Kill and Pressure Wash	<u>1274.88</u>
		<u>1937.61</u>

Cheques received

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council	½ year grant	3342.50
Tennis Club	Donation towards cost of cutting a key to the external store	15.00
Mrs Bunce	Pavilion hire	21.00
Badminton Club	Main Hall hire	<u>198.00</u>
		<u>3576.50</u>

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

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

Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors were given a copy of the 6-monthly statement of accounts for the period ending the 30th September 2007.

Mr. Filer went through the expenditure and income items for both the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts. He explained the variations in the statements. The main expenditure item in the Parish Council accounts is the transfer of £5,000 to the Community Hall account, which is reflected in the Community Hall income-figure.

The Community Hall income on hirings is looking healthy, following our advertising campaign earlier in the year. However, the VAT element on hirings is shown separately, which is confusing because the budget includes the VAT element. It was agreed that in future the Clerk reverts to the old system of including the VAT element.

• **Items for 2008/2009 Budget**

Mr. Filer asked all Parish Councillors to inform him of any items they would like included in the 2008/09 budget as soon as possible. **Action: Parish Councillors**

• **Date for reviewing budget for 2008/09**

It was agreed that the Budget and Finance Sub-committee will meet on Monday 26th November at 1600 and all Parish Councillors are welcome to attend.

• **Bank signatories on COIF fund account and the Alliance and Leicester accounts**

The COIF fund change-of-signature forms have been completed and returned showing all six agreed signatories, namely: Mr. Poulton, Mr. Meischke, Mr. Filer, Mr. Knight, Mrs. Dinnin and the Clerk (Mrs. Allsop).

However, the Alliance and Leicester forms only allow for a maximum of five signatures. It was agreed that the signatories on the Community Hall Alliance and Leicester account should remain the same. Namely: Mr. Poulton, Mr. Meischke, Mr. Filer, Mr. Knight and the Clerk (Mrs. Allsop).

However Mr. Knight to be removed from both the Parish Council accounts and Mrs Dinnin added in his place. The Parish Council signatories will therefore be: Mr. Poulton, Mr. Meischke, Mr. Filer, Mrs. Dinnin and the Clerk (Mrs. Allsop).

The Clerk to arrange for all parties to sign the Alliance and Leicester change of signatory forms accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

• **Audit**

Mrs. McCash said that she had looked at the rules and regulations for the annual Parish Council audit to see if there is a cheaper alternative. She spoke briefly to her old employers, G. H. Attenborough & Co,

outlining what is required and they doubt if they could do the work any cheaper. She agreed to give them the full details of what is required and ask them to give us a quote. **Action: H. McCash**

Mr. Filer agreed to contact Wagstaff Chartered Accountants in Stevenage for a quotation. **Action: D. Filer**

Mr. Poulton said that if we do move our annual audit to a local firm because they are cheaper, we may find it difficult to go back to Lubbock Fine in the future.

Community Hall Trustees

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

- **Report and minutes on meeting held on 2nd October 2007**

All Parish Councillors were given a copy of the minutes of the Trustees meeting held on 2nd October 2007 prior to this meeting.

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

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

Mr. Poulton reported on the following items arising from those minutes.

- **Guttering**

Because the Hertfordshire Mercury did not print the article about Circle Anglia's generous donation of replacing the guttering at the Community Hall, an article will be included in the next issue of the Parish News.

- **Acoustics for Sports Hall**

Mrs. McCash to give Mr. Poulton the telephone number of her acoustics contact. **Action: H. McCash**

Mr. Poulton to arrange a meeting with the Community Hall Trustees and the acoustic contractor.

Action: N. Poulton

- **No-Smoking signs**

Mr. Poulton thanked Mr. Knight for producing the three additional 'No smoking' signs, which have been put up on the external doors of the Community Hall.

- **CCTV equipment**

Mr. Meischke is looking at the feasibility and cost of installing a CCTV system at the Community Hall as a possible budget item for 2008/09.

Action: J. Meischke

- **Boiler and Gas Inspection**

Turners have done the annual gas-inspection.

- **Six-Monthly Report**

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Stock did the six-monthly report 7th October 2007.

- **Long-term capital expenditure items**

Mr. Poulton is in the process of updating the list of estimated long-term capital expenditures items.

Action: N. Poulton

- **Moss Kill and Pressure Wash**

Doe Sport has completed both the moss-kill and the pressure-washing on the MPPA.

- **Mud on the wall of the Community Hall**

The Community Hall wall facing the sportsfield has been pelted with mud. Mr. Poulton borrowed a ladder from Mr. Meischke and cleaned the wall. However, whilst cleaning the area he found that several vents located at approximately 20 feet up the wall were damaged and he had to replace them.

Mr. Poulton did not consider this item to be an act of vandalism and therefore it was not been reported to the police.

- **Damaged brick-wall**

A section of the car park wall has been damaged and broken away near the gate.

Mr. Smith agreed to look at the damage to access what needs to be done to repair it. **Action: M. Smith**

- **Window**

On Friday 12th October one pane of glass in the Parish Meeting Room window which faces School Lane was broken. PC Andy Woodward removed the CCTV camera and recording equipment on Sunday 14th October for image analysis. However, later that day three more panes of glass in this window were broken. The police believe that the windows were broken by someone smashing a car jack (or similar) against them.

The Police are disappointed that the initial analysis of the CCTV footage taken on Friday 12th October does not show any clear images of the vandalism occurring. However the recording has been sent away for more detailed analysis.

PCSO Andy Woodward and PCSO Paul Weston has mixed feelings about the Community Hall Trustees proposals to install a CCTV system. Ideally, any cameras should face the building and have good lighting. Both police officers said there is little point in having the camera facing out from the building.

Mr. Meischke is arranging for two security contractors to quote for clandestine type cameras and ask them for advice. It was agreed that until we get quotes there is no point in discussing the matter further. Stevenage Glass will be replacing the broken panes of glass next week and have estimated £250 plus VAT to do the work. If this price is correct, then it will be below our insurance excess level.

Action: J. Meischke

It was agreed that an article be submitted to the Hertfordshire Mercury stating that over the weekend of 13th/14th October, the Watton-at-Stone Community Hall had four windows broken by mindless vandalism/attempted break-in. Security cameras were in use at the time and the Police have taken recorded material away for analysis.

Action: N. Poulton

Recreation & Amenities

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

- **New Tennis court**
Now that the planning application for the new tennis court has been approved, the Tennis Club is embarking on fund raising activities.
- **Sportsfield development**
The Glebe Committee has agreed to meet with Mr. Poulton and Mr. Knight to discuss the proposals for additional footballing facilities. However, a date has not yet been set.

Environment

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

- **Grass cutting on the Lammas and Watton Green**
Mr. Smith said that the grass cutting was scheduled to be done either today or tomorrow.
- **Bench seat on the Lammas**
The replacement bench seat has been installed and looks very smart.
- **Tree planting on the Cottage Site**
Tony Bradford is still waiting for the new price list so that he can give us an accurate costing for tree planting on the Cottage Site. Mrs. Dinnin to chase. **Action: C. Dinnin**
- **Encroachment on Watton Green**
Mrs. Dinnin, Mr. Poulton and Mr. Stock visited Watton Green and identified areas of encroachment and the amount of work required to rectify the problem. Adam Welch was also present on-site and has submitted the following quotation.
 - 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

The clearance work could be partly funded from the money donated by the Conservation Society together with match-funding obtained from the East Herts Council's LEAF grant scheme. The remaining funds would need to be included in the 2008/09 budget.
This item to be discussed at the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee meeting on Monday 26th November.

Agenda: B&F

Mr. Smith, who declared a pecuniary interest in this item, agreed to look at Adam Welch's quotation to see if the price quoted is fair and reasonable.

- **Sign on Mill Lane**
Mrs. Dinnin found a footpath notice off its post at the top of Mill Lane. Mr. Meischke agreed to fix it back to the post. **Action: J. Meischke**

b) Routine reports

i) Fire-alarm test
The fire-alarm was tested before the start of the meeting.

ii) Monthly village-report
Mr. Harris completed this report on the 14th October 2007, the result of which is as follows.

- **Sportsfield:**

Condition of grass	OK.
Litter	Clear.
Dog fouling	None.
General	Good.
- **Children's Play Area:**

Condition of surface	Muddy but OK.
Litter/Litterbin	OK.
Large swings	OK.
Small swings	OK.
See-Saw	Graffiti

Rainbow multi-play and slide	Good – dog fouling at base of slide, muddy.
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)	Cracked/smashed windows.
Litterbin	OK.
Car Park	OK.
General	OK.
• Multi-Purpose Play Area:	
Surface	Good.
Boundary Fencing	Good.
Tennis nets	Good.
Litter	Good.
General	Good.
• Great Innings Play Area:	
Equipment	OK.
Surfaces	OK.
Litter	None.
Dog fouling	None.
Trees	OK.
Comments	-
• Allotments Area:	
Access	Good.
Condition of paths between Allotments	Good.
Condition of Allotments under cultivation	Good.
Condition of Allotments not under cultivation	Not good.
Litter	Clear.
Comments	-
• Culverts on Mill Lane	
Litter and rubbish in and around Culverts	OK.
Dog-fouling	OK.
Comments	General litter.
• 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	OK.
Sportsfield	OK.
Church Walk	OK.
Walkern Road	OK.
Station Road	OK.
High Street (by Memorial)	OK.
Great Innings	OK.
Mill Lane	OK.
Opposite 5 School Lane	OK.
War Memorial	
Comments	OK.
Ornate Village Sign	
Comments	OK.
Post	-

- **Broken windows at the Community Hall**
This item was discussed under 8 a, Community Hall Trustees.
- **Mill lane**
The very poor condition of the building on the old Mill site was discussed.

iii) Weekly sportsfield-report and action

The only item to report from Ted Brown’s weekly inspections was the mud on wall of the Community Hall.

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 7th October 2007, 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"> • Holes • Cracks • Litter/debris • Weeds • Moss etc. • Court marking 	OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK.		A lot of acorns on the court.
Kicker boards	Are they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure • Graffiti-free • In good condition. Check for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protruding nails • Protruding screws • Splinters/cracks • Missing nails/screws Are the gates free of graffiti, loose/missing nails/screws, cracks and splinters Do the gates open, close and lock	OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK.		Look at painting in 2008/09 for Budget and Finance Sub-Committee.
Tennis posts	Condition	OK.		
Tennis nets	Condition	OK.		
Flood lights	Are the lamps in contact with the trees Are the lamp posts in good order and free of graffiti	No. OK.		
Wire fence	Is the wire mesh: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secured to posts • Free of cuts/breaks • In good condition Is the metal-work (e.g. posts, etc.) secure and in good condition	OK. OK. OK. OK.		
Notice board	Is it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legible • Free of graffiti • Secure • Free of damage 	OK. OK. OK. OK.		

Boundary	Is it:			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free of litter • In need of a cut • Free of problem growth 	OK. OK. OK.		
General/additional comments (if any): - None.				
Play Area on sportsfield				
Check the following points on all pieces of play equipment (i.e. Large swings, small swings, seesaw, multi play/slide 2 spring sit-on).		OK.	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.	OK.		
16	The surface finish of equipment should be free from rust and other corrosion, cracks, splinters, sharp edges and broken or open joints.	OK.		Small amount of painting on multi-play equipment.

Community Hall				
Area	Check	OK	Needs Attention	Comments (if any)
Pavilion				
Tables	Condition	OK.		
Chairs	Condition	OK.		
Corner seat unit	Condition	OK.		
Blinds	Condition	OK.		
Clock	Condition	OK.		
Main Hall				
2 Benches	Condition	OK.		
Badminton posts *	Condition	OK.		
Badminton net	Condition	OK.		
Sports floor	Condition	OK.		Mr. Stock removed yellow circle (to test line removal)
Floor markings **	Condition	OK.		
External toilets	Condition	OK.		For October agenda.
Internal toilets	Condition	OK.		
Showers	Condition	OK.		
Kitchen	Condition	OK.		
First Aid box	Contents: Are they out-of-date or damaged. Are there any items missing.	OK.		Mr. Poulton to check what is required for 1 st Aid.
Fire exit signs		OK.		
Fire extinguishers		OK.		
General/additional comments (if any): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hydrated lime from away-changing-rooms to field – needs cleaning. Store cupboard needs cleaning. Pavilion - painting around hatch, wall and skirting-board. Cobwebs need removing from corridor. Two items need removing from roof. 				

- Sports-floor lining**
 Mr. Stock said that he had removed the yellow-circle lining on the Main Hall and there is no sign of the surface being sticky or slippery.
 It was agreed that he and Vernon Dunhill could remove all of the white and yellow lining and re-lay new badminton court lining. **Action: D. Stock/V. Dunhill**
- Store cupboard**
 Mr. Poulton and Mr. Stock to clean the store cupboard in the Main Hall on a Thursday afternoon when Dave Boddy has already removed his mats. **Action: N. Poulton/D. Stock**
- Cobwebs**
 Rosemary Brown to be instructed to remove all the cobwebs in the Community Hall. **Action: J. Meischke**
- Painting**
 Bob Adams has been asked to quote for painting around the hatch and skirting board and also to paint the small seat on the multi-play and slide equipment at the children’s play area.
- Roof**
 Two items needed removing from roof. **Action: N. Poulton/J. Meischke**

9 Correspondence received

a) Aston Parish Council – Wind Turbines

Mr. Poulton read the following letter from Roy Falder (Clerk, Aston Parish Council) dated 19th September.

‘Thank you for your letter of August 30th.

My Council think the idea of the local Parish Councils actually meeting when the plans are submitted to be a good one. Aston would like such a meeting.

My Council have agreed that when the plans go in they will comment and their comment will only be about the impact on the landscape. Aston will not be troubled by noise and the Council is not expert enough to be able to comment on efficiency of the site, house prices, affect on wildlife etc.

As such we have written to EHDC to check the status of the Beane Valley (Great Landscape Value?) in the revised plan.

Once the plans are public, we are also going to leaflet the village asking residents to let us know if they are for or against it and hold a parish meeting. This will give the parishioners the chance of demonstrating to the Council their opinion (if any).'

b) Letters re retrospective planning application for the Old Chapel, Whempstead

Following the Parish Council’s decision to make no comment on the retrospective planning application for the Old Chapel, Whempstead, two letters of objection from residents of Whempstead were submitted to East Herts Council.

c) Letter from Mr. Smith (Assistant Director, Transport Management, HCC) re cancellation of improvements on the A602

Mr. Poulton read out a letter received from Mr. Smith dated 10th October.

‘Road Improvements – A602

Thank you for your letter dated 1st October 2007. We, too, were disappointed that we were not able to make a start on these road improvements.

The background to this is that funding was made available to us from a government grant and stipulations were laid down by the government sponsoring department that works needed to be completed within the 2007/08 financial year. The reason the scheme has been withdrawn is that we would not now be able to complete all the statutory processes and secure entry to the road in time to ensure that the scheme would have been completed by the end of the financial year. This would have compromised our ability to secure the grant funded by the government and hence expose the County Council to a financial risk that it was unable to bear.

It is our intention, however, to proceed with this scheme as soon as we can secure funding to do so through whatever source but, unfortunately, I cannot give any indication as to when that might be.

Thank you for your interest in this and I am sorry that I am unable to be more positive.’

After discussion, it was agreed to reply to Mr. Smith asking him why they were unable to complete the statutory processes and how can they ensure that this does not happen again. **Action: J. Allsop/I. Harris**

d) Letter from Mr. Alan Thomas of Withers Thomas re Parish Council land at Rivershill

The meeting was closed under ‘Exclusion of press and public’.

The meeting opened again.

When this matter has been resolved the minute for the discussions of this item will be attached to the Parish Council minutes.

e) The Standards Board for England News Release – Factsheets on the Code of Conduct

Mr. Poulton said that the Standards Board for England has produced a range of online Code of Conduct factsheets giving guidance and information on topics identified as receiving the most interest from people working with the Code. The topics are:

- Bullying
- Disclosing confidential information
- Gifts and hospitality
- Lobby groups and declarations of interest
- Personal and prejudicial interests
- The ethical framework for local government

Copies of the factsheets were handed out to all Parish Councillors present.

• Code of Conduct training sessions

Jeff Hughes, Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services at East Herts Council, wrote on 10th October to invite all Parish Councillors and the Clerk to a training session on the Code of Conduct. There are four dates on which the training is being held; two in Hertford and two in Bishop’s Stortford, with choices of morning and afternoon sessions on all four training days as well as evening sessions on two out of the four dates. Each training session is anticipated to last between 1½ and 2 hours.

Parish Councillors will be e-mailed the dates and times for all training sessions and asked to inform the Clerk of their preferred and reserve dates. **Action: Parish Councillors**

The Clerk to give the Parish Councillors preferred and reserve dates to Jeff Hughes. **Action: J. Allsop**

10 Reports from other Organisations

- **Watton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association-** Nothing to report.

- **Watton-at-Stone Memorial Hall Management Committee-** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Watch**
Mrs. McCash said she was in despair that the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme crime-reporting system had failed again. PC Andy Woodward and PCSO Paul Weston have tried to resolve the problem, but Jill Dockley (Hertfordshire Police) has still not been sending regular reports.
Mrs. McCash said that it was her intention to write, as Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator to the Chief Constable at Welwyn-Garden-City asking him to resolve the situation.
This item to be discussed with the police during our Parish Council meeting in November. **Agenda: 11.07**
- **Watton-at-Stone Pre-School Playgroup**
Mrs. Dinnin reported that at its AGM held on 2nd October the Watton-at-Stone Pre-School Playgroup elected a new committee with Jessica Taplow as the new chairperson.
The Playgroup has had an excellent Ofsted report and is enjoying its new premises at the school. Finances are very low due to the move and the small intake of children at the moment. Numbers are due to increase in the New Year. If funds are not raised, the playgroup will be in danger of folding.
Jessica Taplow attended the Oliver Heald surgery in Watton-at-Stone on 13th October and Mr. Poulton gave her four grant-application forms for completion.
- **Watton-at-Stone School Governors** - Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Scout & Guide Group**
Refer to item 7c, Specific items - Dog sign.
- **Watton-at-Stone Sports & Social Club-** Nothing to report.
- **Watton Youth Drop Inn**
Mr. Filer said that his grandson had informed him that the last Youth Club meeting was not very good because there were too many young kids. He suggested that two groups should be run, an earlier group for the younger children and a later group for the older ones. Mr. Poulton said that the Watton Youth Drop Inn is run by volunteers and therefore this would not be a workable idea.
- **Police Authority** - Nothing to report.
- **River Beane Restoration Association** - Nothing to report.

11 Items for Parish News

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

However, an article has been submitted from the Watton-at-Stone Community Hall Trustees to thank Circle Anglia for supplying and fitting the new guttering at the Community Hall. Mr. Poulton said he had contacted the Hertfordshire Mercury in the first instance but they failed to publish the article and therefore it was agreed to submit it to the Parish News.

Look through the November agenda to highlight items to be included in the December issue of the Parish News.

Action: N. Poulton/J. Allsop

- **The meeting closed at 2100.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 20th November 2007.**