

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 18th March 2008

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

1 Apologies for absence

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

2 Public Participation

None.

3 Declaration of Interests

Mr. Knight declared a personal interest in item 9 d, Correspondence received - River Beane Restoration Association – River Beane Environmental Improvements (Mr. Knight is secretary of the River Beane Restoration Association).

4 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

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

- **Community Hall cleaning**
Rosemary Brown has badly cut both of her hands and therefore will be unable to do any cleaning work in the near future.
Mr. Meischke has arranged for Brian Thompson, who previously cleaned the Community Hall in early 2007, to do Rosemary's work until she is able to return.
- **New Badminton Court lining**
Mr. Poulton said that appreciation was due to David and Janet Stock, Mr. Vernon Dunhill and Mrs. Debra Freeman who together removed the old Badminton court lines and laid new ones.

5 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 19th February 2008**
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.

Mr. Smith, who was not present at the February Parish Council meeting, said that he would like to comment on the final sentence of item 5 b, Review of actions - Visit Watton Green to inspect newly installed access-gate.

'Mr. Filer said that if the gate had been positioned 2 meters further forward this problem would not have arisen.'

Mr. Smith said that he sited the gate in this location so that it would allow large vehicles to swing onto Watton Green from Perrywood Lane without encroaching onto Mr. Filer's driveway.

b) Review of actions

- **Provide a list of expenditures made by credit card: completed.**
The Clerk spent a total of £1096 on her credit card for Parish Council and Community Hall expenditures in 2006 and 2007 (4 times in 2006 and 6 times in 2007).
- **Investigate further the possibilities of obtaining a credit card**
Mr. Poulton said that the annual charge for a credit card would not warrant the amount of times it was used. It was agreed not to pursue the matter further.
- **Liaise with Mr. Knight re location of broken footpath marker-post on the Lammas**
Mrs. Dinnin and Mr. Knight were unable to locate the broken footpath marker-post during a site visit to the Lammas.
Mrs. Dinnin said she had spoken to Mr. Dunhill and he believed he might have some spare way-marking discs in his garage. If this is so, Mrs. Dinnin to arrange for a replacement way-marker post to be installed.

Action: C. Dinnin

- **Write to Planning Department re 20 Great Innings North: completed.**
- **Write to Kevin Steptoe of East Herts Council re planning decision for 14 Beane Road: completed.**
- **Arrange for the Clerk to be signed up for Neighbourhood Watch e-mails only: completed.**

- **Arrange the first meeting of the Website Working Group**
The first meeting of the Website Working Group took place on Tuesday 11th March. The Working Group will report back to the Parish Council during its meeting in April.
- **Present the Emergency Plan to the March Parish Council**
Refer to item 7 b, Specific items – Emergency Plan.
- **Chase Zurich for revised insurance quotation for Community Hall: completed.**
Refer to item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee - Community Hall insurance.
- **Accept R K A Services (UK) Limited’s estimate to repair window-closing system in the Main Hall: completed.**
Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall Trustees - Repair of window-closure system in the Main Hall.
- **Have additional key(s) cut to the internal store-cupboard: outstanding.**
- **Investigate obtaining replacement floodlighting parts required**
Refer to item 8 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee - Floodlighting.
- **Contact East Herts Council about the removal of the vehicle in the Community Hall car park: completed.**
Mr. Poulton contacted East Herts Council and they removed the vehicle within 24 hours.
- **Order two sets of tennis nets and steel headline wirers: completed.**
Mr. Knight confirmed that the items have been received.
- **Complete and return attendance form for the Launch of Hertfordshire's Policing Plan 2008/11: completed.**
- **Contact East Herts Council re current Polling arrangements: completed.**
- **Write to Lambert Smith Hampton re ownership of School Lane: completed.**
- **E-mail Parish Councillors a copy of the letter from East Herts Council’s re Housing Capacity Assessment: completed.**
- **Send comments to Mr. Poulton re East Herts Council’s Housing Capacity Assessments**
Refer to item 7 c, Specific items – East Herts Council - Housing Capacity Assessment.
- **Write draft response to East Herts Council’s Housing Capacity Assessment**
Refer to item 7 c, Specific items – East Herts Council - Housing Capacity Assessment.
- **Contact Mr. Poulton re attendance of and topics for the Rural Conference on 29th May**
Refer to item 9 c, Correspondence received - East Herts Council - Rural Parish Conference.
- **Forward e-mail from Councillor Linda Haysey re Rural Conference to all Parish Councillors: completed.**
- **Contact Three Valleys Water re closure of Church Lane and Perrywood Lane: completed.**
The work to install the new water mains is in progress. However, Mr. Poulton said that that when he delivered some documents to Mr. Filer at Watton Green, the condition of the roads was poor. Mr. Filer said that potholes had occurred in the road since the work started.

It was agreed to write to Hertfordshire Highways asking them to ensure that when the contactors have completed their work they clean and carry-out any repair work required on Perrywood Lane and Church Lane.
Action: J. Allsop

c) Action points outstanding for more than two months

- **Write again to the Doctor’s Surgery re overhanging foliage: completed.**

6 Planning

a) Applications

None.

b) Decisions

i) 81, Great Innings North(3/08/0033/FP/CT)

Two storey rear extension and single storey rear extension -East Herts Council permission refused
Reason for refusal:

The proposed two-storey rear extension, by reason of its size and scale would appear overbearing and detrimental to the outlook of the adjoining dwelling. The proposal would thereby be contrary to policies ENV1, ENV5 and ENV6 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

7 Specific items

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

Mrs. McCash confirmed that the work had now been done.

b) Emergency Plan

Mrs. McCash presented her draft Emergency Plan to the Parish Council. Mr. Poulton thanked Mrs. McCash for all her hard work and said it has the basis of being an excellent document.

Mrs. McCash has shown the plan to the police and they have already made some comments on the document. For example, she had based the plan on a major incident occurring outside the boundary of the village and now needs to alter the plan to include procedures should an incident occur within the confines of the village. This affects items such as evacuation venues.

It was agreed that the draft Emergency Plan be placed on circulation for Parish Councillors to comment on.

Action: J. Allsop

Note: Because sensitive material is contained in the document Parish Councillors must treat this document as confidential.

c) East Herts Council - Housing Capacity Assessment

Following the meeting in February, all Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of East Herts Council's letter (dated 12th February 2008) asking them to send their comments to Mr. Poulton so he could draft a response.

Mr. Poulton thanked Mr. Knight for his response re water supply and sewerage.

It was agreed to write to East Herts Council on the following points.

- The infrastructure to support developments should include special reference to water supply and sewage treatment.
- Concerns over transportation especially with regards to the rural areas and the lack of investment going into the road system.
The impact on the environment that could be caused by alternative forms of energy such as wind turbines.

Action: N. Poulton

d) Ferreting Licenses

It was agreed to renew the ferreting licenses for Mr. R. Adams of 4 Glebe Close to ferret Watton Green, the allotments, the Lammas and the paddock at the far end of the Lammas. **Action: N. Poulton/J. Allsop**

e) Cottage Site

It was agreed to renew the licence for Temporary Access across the Land known as the "Old Cottage Site", at Watton Green, issued to Mr. Denis E. Filer (of Brambles, Watton Green). **Action: N. Poulton/J. Allsop**

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

Padlock & 2 keys

7.60

Mr. Beatty – Allotment rent refund

16.00

23.60

Cheques required

Ted Brown

Cutting back shrubbery beside Community Hall

60.00

Ted Brown

32 hours litterpick

224.00

Grassroots

Leaf clearance work

235.00

J. Allsop

March salary

579.63

1098.63

Cheques received

Leslie Scott

Allotment rent

8.00

Gill Lomas

Allotment rent

8.00

Donger

Allotment rent

8.00

24.00

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash

Receipts

Floodlighting

340.00

F. Dixon Main Hall & Pavilion hire

120.00

Jim Keen – Main Hall

80.00

Keith Burgess - repair light switch

50.00

Watton Dots & Tots – Pavilion hire

56.00

50.00

Rickie Law – Main Hall hire

18.00

Laughing Clowns – Pavilion hire

16.00

Gill Gilbey - Main Hall

20.00

650.00

Cheques required

City Roofing	Install black PVC angled verge covers and repair roof	1295.00
Collier Turf	2 tennis nets and steel headline-wires	230.89
Rosemary Brown	24 hours cleaning	156.00
HCC	Cleaning materials	<u>122.84</u>
		<u>1804.73</u>

Cheques received

Watton Youth Drop Inn	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	367.20
Tennis Club	Donation for tennis net and steel headline-wire	98.25
Mrs. McKenzie	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	<u>39.00</u>
		<u>504.45</u>

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

- **Investigate obtaining a credit card for the Parish Council and Community Hall**

Refer to item 5 b, Review of actions - Investigate further the possibilities of obtaining a credit card.

- **Community Hall insurance**

Quotations for insurance cover for the Community Hall, including the MPPA and play areas, have been received from AON Limited (insurer Allianz) and Zurich Village Hall Plus Group as follows.

- AON Limited £ 3,243.47
- Zurich Village Halls Plus Group £2,725.40

The Zurich Village Hall Plus Group provided a more comprehensive cover which made their quotation even more attractive.

Mr. Filer proposed that we accept the Zurich Village Halls Plus Group's quotation and that AON Limited be notified accordingly. Mr. Meischke seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Filer said that we are below the £3,000 budget figure for insurance for 2008/09.

The Clerk to e-mail all Parish Councillors a copy of Zurich Village Hall Plus Group's quotation and summary of insurance cover information sheet.

Action J. Allsop

- **Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) – Annual subscription renewal**

The annual CPRE subscription for 2008/09 is up by £1 to £28.

Mrs. McCash proposed that we renew our CPRE membership. Mrs. Dinnin seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: J. Allsop

- **2008/2009 Non-Domestic Rates**

Mr. Filer said that the rate demand is up by 4% from £999 to £1039.50. The Community Hall benefits from an 80% rate relief.

Mr. Poulton explained to councillors who were not aware of the situation, that to obtain 100% rate relief a Community Hall management committee would need to be formed and members would include regular hirers. The Parish Council would then lose control of the facility. It was agreed when the facility was built that the Parish Council should manage (via the board of Trustees) the Community Hall to avoid 'special-interest groups' taking control.

Community Hall Trustees

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

- **Repair of window-closure system in the Main Hall**

The work will be done in approximately one month's time, when the weather improves.

- **Purchase and replacement of unserviceable strip-lights in Main Hall**

The strip lights will be purchased when the window-closure system is repaired (see above item).

- **Roof repairs**

City Roofing have fitted the black PVC Angled Verge covers and made the necessary repairs to the Community Hall roof. Parish Councillors agreed that the new verge covers looked very smart.

Recreation & Amenities

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

- **Sportsfield development**

We are still waiting for a response from the Diocesan Glebe Committee re our request to lease additional land for sporting facilities. It was agreed not to chase the Diocesan Surveyor for a response.

- **Floodlighting**

A cherry-picker will be required to inspect the broken floodlighting fittings so that replacement parts can be purchased. This work cannot be done until the ground can take the weight of a cherry picker without

causing damage to the sportsfield. It may also be beneficial to wait until one or two more floodlights need replacing before a cherry-picker comes on site.

- **New tennis court**

The Tennis Club has started fundraising activities to raise the £30,000 to £35,000 needed for this project. A Quiz Night will be held on 19th April at Watton School. Also, raffle tickets are currently on sale for a prize draw to be drawn on the Quiz Night.

Environment

Mrs. Dinnin had nothing to report.

b) Routine reports

- i) **Fire-alarm test**

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

- ii) **Monthly village-report**

Mr. Meischke completed this report on the 14th March 2008, the result of which is as follows.

- **Sportsfield:** Just cut.
 Condition of grass OK.
 Litter OK.
 Dog fouling OK.
 General Good.
- **Children’s Play Area:** OK.
 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) OK.
 Litterbin OK.
 Car Park OK.
 General Good.
- **Multi-Purpose Play Area:**
 Surface OK.
 Boundary Fencing OK.
 Tennis nets OK.
 Litter OK.
 General Good.
- **Great Innings Play Area:**
 Equipment OK.
 Surfaces OK.
 Litter OK.
 Dog fouling OK.
 Trees OK.
 Comments Some breaking up of plastic flooring.
- **Allotments Area:**
 Access Good.
 Condition of paths between Allotments OK.
 Condition of Allotments under cultivation OK.
 Condition of Allotments not under cultivation OK.
 Litter OK.
 Comments Very good.
- **Culverts on Mill Lane**
 Litter and rubbish in and around Culverts Poor.
 Dog-fouling Poor.

Comments Horrid.

- **Salt bins**

Perrywood Lane OK.
 Entrance to Great Innings OK. Lid broken.
 Great Innings South – outside number 93 OK.
 Station Road OK.
 Moorymead Close (2) OK. Lid broken.
 Hazeldell OK. Lid open.

- **Dog-waste bins**

Footpath 17 OK.
 Sportsfield OK.
 Church Walk OK.
 Walkern Road Missing lid.
 Station Road OK.
 High Street (by Memorial) OK.
 Great Innings OK.
 Mill Lane OK.
 Opposite 5 School Lane OK.

- **War Memorial**

Comments Good.

- **Ornate Village Sign**

Comments Good.
 Post Good.
 General Comments -

- **Sportsfield grass been cut**

The sportsfield has been cut for the first time this year.

- **Great Innings safety surface**

Some of the plastic matting under play equipment is lifting and could cause a trip hazard. The main areas affected are the two spring sit-on, the multi-slide and the car.

East Herts Council to be asked to inspect the area and take any action necessary. **Action J. Allsop**

- **Gaps in fence on the Great Innings Play area**

A request has been received that a gate be installed in the gap between the fence on the Great Innings Estate play area to protect small children.

It was agreed that because the gap opens onto a footpath, and not a road, that gates are not needed.

- **The Mill, Mill Lane**

Some of the fence panels on the road-side boundary of the Mill are broken, thus allowing access onto the site. In its current condition, the broken fencing will be an allurements to trespasses and needs repairing as soon as possible. Also, there is shrubbery growing over into the road and this needs cutting back as it is a hazard to vehicles.

The owner of the Mill is unknown but the property is currently for sale and the agent is Freeth Melhuish in Welwyn Garden City.

The Clerk to write to Freeth Melhish accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**

iii) Weekly sportsfield-report and action

Ted Brown has trimmed back the bushes in the Community Hall garden.

- **Post and gate on Watton Green**

Mr. Filer said that he had applied a white undercoat to the newly installed post adjacent to the gate on Watton Green. Mr. Meischke agreed to provide some silver spray paint so the post matches the gate.

Action: J. Meischke

Mr. Filer to spray paint the post.

Action D. Filer

9 Correspondence received

a) **Oliver Heald - Stop Stansted Expansion campaign re proposed flight-path changes**

Prior to the meeting all Parish Councillors were given the internet link showing the proposed changes in flight plans. Mr. Meischke said that the changes looked to be a slight improvement for our area.

It was agreed to write to Oliver Heald informing him that the Parish Council had no comment on the proposed flight-path changes.

Action J. Allsop

b) Wildlife Trusts – Water Vole Survey of the Lammass

The Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust wrote on 21st February requesting permission to carry-out a Water Vole Survey on the Lammass. It was agreed that the Parish Council had no objections to the survey.

The Clerk to notify the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust accordingly.

Action J. Allsop

c) East Herts Council - Rural Parish Conference

Mr. Poulton said that the Clerk has agreed attend the conference on 29th May.

Note: It was reported at the February meeting that Mr. Poulton would be attending the conference, however he is now unable to do so.

d) River Beane Restoration Association – River Beane Environmental Improvements

Mr. Knight summarised the contents of a letter dated 25th February from the Chairman of the River Beane Restoration Association (Dave Stimpson) and the enclosed copy letter to Oliver Heald (dated 21st February) concerning the River Beane.

Mr. Knight said that it is taking a long time to effect any improvements to the low-flow problems of the River Beane. The priority is certain to be ensuring the security of the water supply for drinking, above the issue of the overall quality of the river.

A strategy being proposed by the RBRA is that the low-flow problems would be resolved if water used in the area was treated in local sewage works and the treated effluent water returned near or above the points of abstraction in the lower reaches of the River Beane.

Mr. Knight agreed to draft a letter to Oliver Heald supporting the River Beane Restoration Association's concerns.

Action: I. Knight

10 Reports from other Organisations

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

Mr. Poulton said that the work to extend the rabbit fencing to the back of the Glebe hedge adjacent to the footpath is due to start on 29th March. The Allotment and Garden Association has requested that the Parish Council notifies the allotment holders affected by the installation asking them to temporarily move any items (by about 6 feet) from that hedge to allow access to the contractor.

It was agreed to write to the allotment holders affected.

Action: J. Allsop

The Allotment and Garden Association will be holding its AGM on Tuesday 6th May in the Community Hall.

- **Flower festival**

Mr. Poulton said that the Watton-at-Stone Parish Church will be hosting a Flower Festival on 13th and 14th September 2008.

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

Mr. Filer said that the Memorial Hall electricity bill had increased by 25%.

- **Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Watch:** Nothing to report.

- **Watton-at-Stone Pre-School Playgroup**

Mrs. Dinnin reported that the Watton-at-Stone Pre-School Playgroup's financial situation had greatly improved. There is a good intake of new children at Easter. Fund raising events include an Easter Egg Extravaganza and a Quiz Night at Watton-at-Stone Primary school.

- **Watton-at-Stone School Governors:** Nothing to report.

- **Watton-at-Stone Scout & Guide Group**

Mr. Harris said that the Scout and Guide Group will be holding its AGM soon.

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

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

- **Police Authority**

Mr. Filer said he will attending the launch of Hertfordshire's Policing plan for 2008/11 on 31st March and will give his report to the Parish Council at its meeting on 15th April under Specific items. **Agenda: 04/08**

- **River Beane Restoration Association**

Refer to item 9 d, River Beane Restoration Association – River Beane Environmental Improvements.

Exclusion of Press and Public minute

Mr. Poulton handed out copies of the February 2008 Exclusion of Press and Public minute re Parish Council owned land, which is printed on yellow paper.

11 Items for Parish News

No items were identified for inclusion in the April 2008 issue of the Parish News.

- **The meeting closed at 2012**

- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 15th April 2008.**