

Minutes of the meeting of the Wotton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 15th April 2008

Present: Mr. N. Poulton (Chairman) Mr. J. Meischke (Vice-Chairman)
 Mr. C. Clark Mrs. C. Dinnin
 Mr. D. Filer 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. Harris.

2 Public Participation

None.

3 Declaration of Interests

Mr. Stock declared a personal interest in item 6 a, Planning applications – 14 Hazeldell. (Mr. Stock knows one of the applicants personally).

Mrs. McCash declared a pecuniary interest in item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee - Internal and external audit of Parish Council and Community Hall accounts (Mrs. McCash's husband, Murray McCash, will be doing the audit of the Community Hall accounts).

Mrs. McCash declared a personal interest in item 9 h, Correspondence received - Flower Festival 2008 - request for grant. (Mrs. McCash is a member of the Flower Festival committee.)

4 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

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

- **Website**

During a recent meeting of the Website Working-Group Mr. Stock presented his proposal for the structure and content of the new Parish Council website. He explained that his objective is to achieve a simple and uncluttered structure that is easy to understand and navigate. After some minor changes with regard to where some website items would appear, the working group decided to recommend that the Parish Council accepts Mr. Stock's proposal so that development work can continue without delay.

To facilitate this, Mr. Stock e-mailed a copy of his proposal, together with sample 'website screen-displays' (as attachments), to all Parish Councillors. However, some Parish Councillors had not been able to open the attachments so Mr. Stock gave an overview of his proposals and showed examples of how the screens would appear and be navigated.

The Parish Council then accepted the recommendation of the working group.

Mr. Stock finished by saying that work on approximately 70% of the revised content had been completed and he would put a copy of this on circulation at an appropriate time. Also, that he would work with Peter Allsop (when he is free from his studies and exams) to implement and develop the new website.

- **Request to advertise on the website**

Mr. Poulton said that the Parish Council had received an e-mail from Meta Reeves, asking if we can put up a small announcement on our website and attaching an image. The notice is to advertise the Preston Gardens Open Day on Sunday 25th May.

It was agreed that the Parish Council's general principle is not to put up notices for events that are outside the parish boundary. However, on this occasion, if Meta Reeves sends us some posters we will put them up on our notice boards (space permitting).

The Clerk to notify Meta Reeves accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Mick Inman - stiles by church field**

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter from Mick Inman (16 Rivershill).

'Could you please inform the Parish Council that the stile at the south end of the footpath from Glebe Court to the Church field is difficult and dangerous to climb over as the step is incorrectly situated.

The step needs repositioning nearer to the centre of the stile and a post put in to hold on to. When crossing using the existing step you have to cling onto some ivy that is growing around a tree or post.'

Because this is not a Parish Council issue, Mr. Poulton e-mailed Mr. Inman's letter to Tom Goldsmith (Rights of Way, Hertfordshire County Council). Mr. Goldsmith has asked for the contact details for the landowners, which is the St. Albans Diocesan Board. Mr. Knight to give Mr. Poulton the contact details for Alistair Woodgate the Diocesan Surveyor.

Action: I. Knight

5 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 18th March 2008**
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

- **Arrange to have replacement way-marker post installed on the Lammas**
Mrs. Dinnin said that Mr. Dunhill had found some spare way-marker discs.
It was agreed not to replace the missing way-marker post because there are sufficient in the area.
- **Write to Hertfordshire Highways re condition of Perrywood Lane and Church Lane: completed.**
Mr. Poulton said that the work to install the new water mains had been completed and the contractors have done some repair work to the carriage-way. On inspection, Mr. Filer and Mr. Poulton agreed that 75% of the repair work was satisfactory although further work needs to be done to bring the condition of the road back to how it was prior to the work on the water main. Ian Bishop (Hertfordshire Highways) has agreed to meet on-site with Mr. Filer and Mr. Poulton together with a representative from the contractors (NRSA) who did the work on behalf of Three Valleys Water. NRSA is responsible for paying for any work needed.
This item to be placed on the May 2008 agenda, under Specific items. **Agenda: 05/08**
- **Place draft Emergency Plan be placed on circulation: completed.**
Mr. Smith said that he currently has the document.
This item to be placed on the May 2008 agenda, under Specific items. **Agenda: 05/08**
- **Write to East Herts Council re Housing Capacity Assessment: completed.**
- **Renew the ferreting licenses: completed.**
- **Renew licence for Temporary Access across the Land known as the “Old Cottage Site”: completed.**
- **Accept the Zurich Village Halls Plus Group’s quotation for Community Hall insurance cover: completed.**
- **Write to AON Limited re their quotation for Community Hall insurance cover: completed.**
- **E-mail all Parish Councillors a copy of Zurich Village Hall Plus Group’s quotation: completed.**
- **Renew CPRE annual membership: completed.**
- **Write to East Herts Council re safety surface at Great Innings play area: completed.**
The Clerk said that Trevor Waldock (East Herts Council) rang her following receipt of the Parish Council’s letter concerning the sections of the safety-surface matting that were lifting. Mr. Waldock said that the areas that are lifting could not be a trip hazard because they are not in walkable areas (e.g. at the base of the spring sit-on where it is secured to the ground). He asked the Clerk what qualifications Parish Councillors had to carry-out such inspections. The Clerk asked Trevor Waldock to reply in writing to the Parish Council outlining the issues raised in their conversation. No letter has been received to-date.
Mr. Stock said that qualified or not, he felt that we should continue to report anything that is considered to be a fault or problem on the Great Innings play area. This was agreed.
Mr. Poulton said that when he did the monthly village-report on 11th April, there were no problems with the safety-surface at the Great Innings play area.
- **Write to Freeth Melhuish in Welwyn Garden City re the Mill, Mill Lane**
Mr. Poulton said that the wooden fencing at the Mill has been reinstated. However, the shrubbery has not been cut back. Mr. Poulton said that in his opinion the shrubbery was not a problem and if cut back was more likely to draw attention to the abandoned state of the building. This was agreed, no further action to be taken.
- **Provide silver spray-paint for post at Watton Green**
Mr. Meischke gave the paint to Mr. Filer just prior to the start of the meeting.
- **Paint post at Watton Green**
Now that Mr. Filer is in possession of the paint he is able to complete this action point. **Action: D. Filer**
- **Write to Oliver Heald re proposed flight path change: completed.**
- **Write to Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust re Water Vole Surgery on the Lammas: completed.**
- **Write to Oliver Heald re Environment issues concerning the River Beane: completed.**
Refer to item 9 g, Correspondence received - Oliver Heald – River Beane.

- **Write to the allotment holders affected by installation of rabbit-proof fencing: completed.**
Refer to item 7 c, Specific items - Allotments-Rabbit Proof Fence/Gate.

c) Action points outstanding for more than two months

None.

6 Planning

a) Applications

Mr. Poulton said that because the plans for 14 Hazeldell and 5 Watton House had not arrived at the Clerk's address, he collected them from East Herts Council today. Therefore, the residents affected by these plans had not yet been visited.

It was agreed that these residents should be contacted before the Parish Council makes its response. In accordance with the 'Watton-at-Stone Parish Council Protocol for Planning Applications', it was agreed that a minimum of three Parish Councillors should meet on Thursday 17th April to look at the plans for items 6a i, 14 Hazeldell and 6 a ii, 5 Watton House to and make a decision on what response should be made.

Action: N. Poulton/ J. Meischke/D/ Filer/H. McCash

i) 14, Hazeldell (3/08/0536/FP/JS)

Front and rear ground floor extensions.

Mr. Stock took no part in the discussions for this application (refer to item 3 declarations of interest).

Refer to item 6 a, above.

Note:

At a meeting held on 17th April, it was agreed to write to the planning department as follows.

'The Parish Council strongly objects to the above application for the following reasons.

1. The front extension would be further out than other front extensions in the area and would therefore be out of the building line and out of keeping with the area.
2. The Parish Council objects to any garage conversion in Hazeldell. The loss of parking space caused by the garage conversion is likely to lead to increased parking either on-street or on the frontage of the site.
3. The rear extension is an over development.'

ii) 5 Watton House, Ware Road (3/08/0381/FP/MC)

Replace window with French doors and full length windows. Create first floor balcony with supports to ground level.

Refer to item 6 a above.

Note:

At a meeting held on 17th April, it was agreed to write to the planning department as follows.

'The Parish Council strongly objects to the above application for the following reasons.

- Encroachment of 1st floor balcony onto property below.
- The creation of the 1st floor balcony would cause light restriction to the property below.
- Not in keeping with other properties in the surrounding area.'

iii) 81, Great Innings North (3/08/0603/FP/MC)

Single storey rear extension

Mr. Poulton read out an e-mail dated 13th April from Mr. Harris.

'I finally made contact with the only direct neighbour to 81, at 83 this evening at the third attempt.

Having looked at the plans Mr. and Mrs. Singleton had no problems. They felt this was not an intrusive development/extension, unlike the previous one.

Accordingly I would suggest that on Tuesday we decide to make no comment. I hope to be there, but this is subject to a previous meeting so permitting. I will drop the plans around to you before Tuesday evening.'

Parish Councillors were unable to discuss this application because Mr. Harris had been unable to return the plans to the Clerk in time for the meeting.

In accordance with the 'Watton-at-Stone Parish Council Protocol for Planning Applications', it was agreed that Mr. Poulton, Mr. Meischke, Mr. Filer and Mrs. McCash will look at the plans on 17th April.

Note:

At a meeting held on 17th April, it was agreed to write to the planning department stating that the Parish Council had no comments on this application.

b) Decisions**i) 20 Great Innins North ((3/08/0195/FP/CT)**

First floor rear extension

-East Herts Council permission granted

c) Appeal**i) 16 Moorymead Close**

Conversion of garage to living accommodation

After discussion, it was agreed to repeat our original objection as follows.

‘The Parish Council objects to the principal of a garage being converted into living accommodation.

In addition, the development would ultimately lead to an increase in on-street parking.’

Action: J. Allsop**7 Specific items****a) Emergency Plan**

Mrs. McCash said that she had e-mailed the Police a copy of the Emergency Plan together with an outline of the modification required should a major incident occur within the confines of the village (the original plan had been based on a major incident occurring outside the boundary of the village). The police were very impressed with the plan and have forwarded it to the Hertfordshire Fire Brigade and Ambulance Service for their comments. Mrs. McCash said that she will be meeting with the Hertfordshire Police to obtain any feedback.

b) Report on the launch of Hertfordshire’s Policing plan for 2008/11

Mr. Filer reported that he had attended the launch of the Hertfordshire Policing Plan 2008-11 on 31st March 2008 and found the standard of presentations to be higher than in previous years. Although he had circulated slides and comments to Parish Councillors, he made the following comments.

- A survey had shown that 86% think that the police do a good job and 61% supported a higher precept for police services.
- The force had been graded as a good and improving police force.
- There had been a drop of 12.2% in recorded crime in the last year.
- The force was one of two that had been graded as excellent nationally.
- Since the use of mobile phones whilst driving had become an endorsable offence the number of people contesting the charge had increased to about 900 out of over 4000 offences.
- There was a large 'night club economy' in Hertfordshire which caused the police problems.

c) Allotments rabbit-proof fence/gate

The work to extend the rabbit-proof fencing has been done.

Mr. Poulton said he had received a request to install a lockable rabbit-proof gate in place of the current blocked-up gate onto Church Walk. This access is used to take flowers from the allotments up to the Church.

Mr. Poulton said he had discussed the issue with Mr. Meischke and they could see no problem with the request. After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed that a lockable rabbit-proof gate could be installed.

Mr. Poulton to speak to John Phillips accordingly.

Action: N. Poulton**d) BT phone box**

Mr. Poulton asked the Clerk to chase British Telecom re the reinstatement of the (listed) red phone box that was dragged from its foundations on the evening of 5th November.

The Clerk e-mailed British Telecom on 31st March to find out when the replacement red phone box (K6 style kiosk) is due to be installed. On 7th April Josephine Brown phoned apologizing for the delay, which was partly due to the original person dealing with the case no longer working for British Telecom. She said that it is unclear from the files if any parts had been ordered yet and she would investigate and get back to us within the next two weeks. The reference for this case is EA34305321 and British Telecom can be contacted on 0800 661610 (option 2) for any updates.

Mr. Poulton said that we have received today a letter, dated 11th April, from Kevin Steptoe (East Herts Council) advising us of the removal of 52 payphones in the East Herts area.

It was agreed to write to Rick Thompson (Project Liaison Officer, BT Payphones) asking him if one of the red phone boxes (K6 style kiosk) due for removal could be relocated to replace the one in the High Street in Watton-at-Stone. The nearest K6 style kiosk due for removal is in Hooks Cross.

Action J. Allsop**e) The Village Pump**

Two weeks ago, at around 2200, John Phillips frightened away two youths trying to remove lead from the roof of the Village Pump. Mr. Poulton said that if you now look at the roof you will see that some of the lead has been peeled back, but fortunately not removed.

Mr. Poulton reported the incident to the police and obtained a crime reference number. PC Andy Woodward is trying to obtain some special paint which when applied to a surface would identify anyone who touches it.

- **Hertford Police station**

Hertford Police station has now relocated to Solartron House, Hale Road, Hertford, SG14 1DX. Their new direct-line telephone number is 01992 533669. The Clerk to e-mail these details to all Parish Councillors.

Action: 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

None

Cheques required

St. Albans Diocesan Board	MPPA Glebe rent	90.00
Hertfordshire County Council	Lighting energy charges - 01/03/08 – 31/03/08	148.79
Hertfordshire County Council	Lighting maintenance charges - 01/03/08 – 31/03/08	205.11
East Herts Council	Dog-waste bin emptying and maintenance 1/4/07 – 31/03/08	279.72
J. Allsop	Phone charges November 2007 – March 2008	88.70
Inland Revenue	Tax and NI	186.51
Frank Cooper	Grass cut in March	45.33
Hertfordshire County Council	Stationary	12.38
Ted Brown	Strimming work	30.00
David Stock	Ink cartridges re website design	<u>26.90</u>
		<u>1113.44</u>

Cheques received

None

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash

Receipts

Floodlighting	179.00
Steve Ellis – Main Hall	9.50
H. Brownlow Main Hall & Pavilion	45.00
Watton Dots & Tots – Pavilion hire	56.00
Rickie Law – Main Hall hire	16.00
John Murphy	6.00
Gill Gilbey - Main Hall	<u>10.00</u>
	<u>321.50</u>

Payments

6 floresant lighting tubes for Main Hall	15.00
2 starter motors for floresant tubes	<u>1.78</u>
	<u>16.78</u>

Cheques required

B. Thompson	8 hours cleaning	52.00
Customs and Excise	VAT return 02/08	96.37
HCC	Cleaning materials	13.28
John Phillips	Opening toilets 15.2.08 - 31.03.08	46.00
Rosemary Brown	16 hours cleaning	105.00
G. Smith	Window cleaning	56.00
RKA Services (UK) Ltd	Repair window closure system in Main Hall	552.25
Suffolk ACRE Services Limited	Annual insurance premium	2725.40
James Turner Limited	Repair to radiator	<u>47.00</u>
		<u>3693.30</u>

Cheques received

Steve Ellis	Main Hall	<u>189.90</u>
		<u>189.90</u>

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

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

All Parish Councillors present at the meeting were given a copy of the statement of accounts for the year ending the 31st March 2008.

Mr. Filer went through the expenditure and income items for both the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts and explained the variations in the statements. 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 income from hiring the Community Hall looks healthy, following our advertising campaign at the beginning of 2007.

- **Summary 12-monthly statement of accounts for the Parish Council and Community Hall for the year ended 2005/06**

Parish Councillors were given the summary 12-monthly statement of accounts for the Parish Council and Community Hall for the year ended 2007/08 which will be presented at the Annual Parish meeting on 13th May. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Internal and external audit of Parish Council and Community Hall accounts**

The following re-appointments were made.

- Mr. Jim Morrissey to carry-out the internal audit of the Parish Council accounts.
- McCash and Hay to carry-out the audit for the Community Hall accounts.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Parish Council insurance cover for 2007/08**

Mr. Filer said that the Clerk contacted Came and Company (who act as agents for Norwich Union) asking them to provide us with an alternative quotation for our Parish Council insurance and sending them a copy of Allianz's schedule for 2008/09 with the premium cost blanked out. He then read out an e-mail dated 14th April from Peter Came.

'Sadly as you have blanked out the premiums paid we are unable to quote for your parish.

We would not expect you to fill in a proposal form if you were to switch to Norwich Union and have significantly improved the cover provided by Allianz as well as getting NU to include a 5% per year no claims discount up to a maximum of 20% over 4 years.

I do hope that you may reconsider.'

Mr. Filer said he had had a rather unpleasant conversation with Peter Came today. Mr. Filer told him that in his opinion it was unethical to provide them with the figures from another provider. Mr. Came told Mr. Filer that if that was the case then he would not be able to provide a quotation.

After discussion, it was agreed to write to Norwich Union informing them in detail of the incident with Came and Company and asking them if they could provide us with a quotation. **Action: D. Filer**

Community Hall Trustees

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

- **Report and minutes on meeting held on 1st April 2008**

All Parish Councillors were given a copy of the minutes of the Trustees meeting held on 1st April 2008 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.

- **Acoustics for Main Hall**

Mr. Eddie Turner (Prism Displays) has been contacted on numerous occasions, but still not arranged to deliver the free-standing acoustics panels to the Community Hall. Mr. Poulton agreed to contact him one more time. **Action: N. Poulton**

- **Pavilion exit doors**

Mrs. Dinnin proposed that the Parish Council accepts Brian Bunyan's quotation for supplying and fitting replacement doors in hardwood, as recommended by the Community Hall Trustees.

Mr. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Mr. Meischke to inform Brian Bunyan accordingly.

Action: J. Meischke

Recreation & Amenities

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

- **Sportsfield development**

Mr. Knight has spoken to Nigel Berger (secretary to the Diocesan Glebe Committee) today. They are in the process of contacting the East Herts Planning Department. We will not get a response until the Glebe Committee has met in June.

- **Floodlighting**

Two more grills and protective glass-covers on the floodlighting columns have been damaged. There are two lights per column and three out of the eight lights are now damaged. The damage is most probably vandalism caused by a catapult being fired at the floodlights. Mr. Knight was informed by a member of

the Tennis Club who is in the floodlighting business that the glass covering the bulbs is probably curved and not flat. A cherry picker will be required to inspect one of the unbroken units.

Mr. Knight to contact David Webster Limited (DW) to ask them to quote.

Action: I. Knight

- **New tennis court**

Nothing to report. This item to be removed from the agenda.

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. Poulton completed this report on the 11th April 2008, the result of which is as follows.

- **Sportsfield:**

Condition of grass	Good – just been cut.
Litter	None.
Dog fouling	None.
General	Excellent.

- **Children’s Play Area:**

Condition of surface	Good.
Litter/Litterbin	Empty.
Large swings	Good.
Small swings	Good.
See-Saw	Good.
Rainbow multi-play and slide	Good, but some graffiti. Will be removed when painted.
Two spring sit-on	Good. Weed kill around this safety surface needed.
Teen shelter	Good
General	Very good.

- **Bike ramps area:**

Junior Jump	OK. }
Double Ramp	OK. } Appear not to be used.
Fun Box	OK. }

- **Community Hall:**

General Condition (Exterior)	Good, but needs painting (in hand).
Litterbin	Empty.
Car Park	Good.
General	OK, windows being cleaned around Community Hall. Weed kill around community hall.

- **Multi-Purpose Play Area:**

Surface	Good.
Boundary Fencing	Good.
Tennis nets	Good. 3 holes in one net, 1 hole in other.
Litter	None.
General	New notice board has been erected. Street light bulb casing broken and reported to Hertfordshire Highways.

- **Great Innings Play Area:**

Equipment	Good.
Surfaces	Good.
Litter	None.
Dog fouling	None.
Trees	OK.
Comments	No problems.

- **Allotments Area:**

Access	Good.
Condition of paths between Allotments	Good.
Condition of Allotments under cultivation	Good.
Condition of Allotments not under cultivation	Good.
Litter	None.
Comments	Rabbit-proof fencing been erected.

- **Culverts on Mill Lane**

Litter and rubbish in and around Culverts	None.
---	-------

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Dog-fouling | None. |
| Comments | OK, but a lot of brush from the river dumped by culverts. |
- **Salt bins**

Perrywood Lane	
Entrance to Great Innings	OK.
Great Innings South – outside number 93	Lid broken.
Station Road	OK.
Moorymead Close (2)	OK – one lid damaged at entrance to Moorymead Close.
Hazeldell	OK.
Footpath 17	OK.
 - **Dog-waste bins**

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

Comments	OK.
	A lot of weeds.
 - **Ornate Village Sign**

Comments	OK.
Post	Good.
General Comments	OK.
 - **Request for dog-waste bin near station**

Mr. Poulton said that he had received a request for a dog-waste bin to be sited by the railway station. He has spoken to East Herts Council about the request and they are investigating the possibility of installing a bin. Permission will be required from the owner of the land before any installation takes place.

Action: N. Poulton
 - **Weed killing**

Mr. Poulton to ask Ted Brown to week-kill around the play area safety-surface and the Community Hall.

Action: N. Poulton
 - **Tennis nets**

Mr. Knight said that he was aware of the holes in the tennis nets and new ones are due to be fitted soon.
 - **Notice board at the MPPA**

Mr. Knight said that a new notice board has been installed to replace the existing one.
 - **Damaged street light**

Mr. Poulton has reported the damaged street light on Church Walk, adjacent to the MPPA, to Hertfordshire Highways fault line.
 - **War memorial garden**

Mrs. Dinnin agreed to contact Adam Welch to remind him to do the Memorial Garden maintenance.

Action: C. Dinnin
- Note:** The flowerbed maintenance work is scheduled to be done in the last weeks of April, June, August and October of each year.
- **Broken air-vent**

Mr. Poulton has fitted a new air-vent in the Community Hall. Because this is a regular occurrence, we keep a stock of spare air vents.
 - **Entrance door on the car-park side of the Community Hall**

Mr. Meischke successfully repaired the entrance door on the car-park side to the Community Hall because it would not close.
 - **Toilet roll holders in external toilets**

Toilet roll holders have now been fitted in all the external toilets.
- iii) **Weekly sportsfield-report and action**
 Nothing to report.

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

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke did the six-monthly check on the 12th April 2008, 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.		
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.		
Tennis posts	Condition	OK.		
Tennis nets	Condition	OK.		Holes in nets.
Flood lights	Are the lamps in contact with the trees Are the lamp posts in good order and free of graffiti	No. OK.		Note: Glass broken in two of the light (in hand and reported to the Police).
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): - New notice board – by Tennis Club.				

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.		Weed kill around safety surfaces.
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.		Graffiti on multi-play equipment (in hand to be painted).
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.		

Community Hall

Area	Check	OK	Needs Attention	Comments (if any)
Pavilion				
Tables	Condition	OK.		
Chairs	Condition	OK.		
Corner seat unit	Condition	OK.		
Blinds	Condition			Poor condition of bottom of the blinds.
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.		✓	Replace all items in box.
Fire exit signs		OK.		
Fire extinguishers		OK.		
General/additional comments (if any): None.				

- **Blinds in pavilion**

The blinds in the pavilion have sun damage at the bottom and will need repairing in the near future.

- **First aid box**

The first-aid box is inspected every six months and replacement items purchased as and when necessary. It was agreed that rather than replace items in the first-aid box when they go out of date, we purchase (from County Supplies) a complete medium-risk recreation kit for 25 to 50 people every 6 to 12 months, depending on the expiry date. The current cost of this kit is £22.04. The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

9 Correspondence received

a) Stop Stansted Expansion

Stop Stansted Expansion wrote on 21st February asking if they could have the opportunity to make a presentation to the Parish Council on the forthcoming battle against BAA's second runway plans.

It was agreed that the Parish Council did not require a presentation and there was no need to respond to Stop Stansted Expansion's letter.

b) NATS – Terminal Control North – proposed changes to Airspace

Prior to the meeting all Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of the National Air Traffic System's (NATS) letter dated 19th February and a leaflet on the proposed changes to airspace.

On viewing the internet link provided, Mr. Poulton said it was only flights from Stansted that showed a small change in flight patterns over this area.

It was agreed to write to NATS informing them that the Parish Council looked at the website and literature and had no comments to make on the proposed flight-path changes.

Action J. Allsop

c) East Herts Council re planning application at 14 Beane Road

Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of a letter, dated 25th March, from Alison Young (Development Control Manager, East Herts Council). Parish Councillors agreed that it was an unsatisfactory letter in anumber of ways.

In the penultimate paragraph of the first page of the letter it states:

'You will note that the determination of all planning and allied applications is delegated to specific Officers in Development Control, except in certain circumstances. The application at 14 Beane Road did not fall within any of those exceptional criteria and, in addition, there is a note on file that the case officer did discuss the application with the local Member who raised no objections to it.'

Mr. Poulton said that he did discuss the application with Susie Defoe, the officer in charge of this case. She informed him that there were no grounds for refusing this application. However, he did not state that he had no objections to the application.

Mr. Poulton to contact Alison Young to obtain a letter of retraction on the statement – 'the local Member who raised no objections to it'

Action: N. Poulton

d) Cricket Club

Mr. Poulton read out a letter dated 26th March from Martin Tipper (Watton-at-Stone Cricket Club) as follows.

- **Purchase of sight screens**

The Cricket Club has decided that this year's project will be to purchase new sight screens.

The intention is to apply to East Herts Council for a Community Capital Grant but prior to an application the Club is required to approach the local Parish Council to ascertain whether or not any financial support would be available.

I would be grateful if you could confirm, or otherwise, that that the Council is unable to contribute to this project.

I look forward to hearing from you.'

The total cost of the sight screens is £2515 including VAT and delivery (i.e. £985.50, plus VAT of £172.46 per sight screen, plus a £100 delivery charge).

Mrs. McCash confirmed that the Community Hall Trustees can only purchase and claim back VAT on items purchased provided they stay in their ownership and the item(s) are included on their Asset Register.

After discussion, it was agreed to write to the Watton-at-Stone Cricket Club informing them of the situation regarding VAT and that the Parish Council agreed in principle to the purchase of the sight screens on this basis. However, the sight screens would be used solely by the Watton-at-Stone Cricket Club and they would be responsible for insuring them.

Action: H. McCash/J. Allsop

- **Asset Registers**

Mr. Poulton and the Clerk to check the Asset Registers for the Parish Council and Community Hall.

Action: N. Poulton/J. Allsop

e) East Herts Council - Annual Charge for dog bin emptying

Ian Sharratt (Environment Manager – Parks & Open Spaces, East Herts Council) wrote on 27th March to inform us that as from 1st April, East Herts Council starts its new Grounds Contract with John O'Conner and the annual price for emptying each dog bin will increase from £93.25 (in 2007/08) to £152.40 (in 2008/09). This will then rise annually in accordance with the 'Retail Price Index set by the Bank of England. For this price, each dog bin will continue to be emptied on 76 occasions throughout the year. Once a week between 1st October and 31st March and twice per week during the warmer months from 1st April and 30th September. All faeces should be cleared within a five meter radius of the bin at each visit and the bin will be pressure washed at quarterly intervals throughout the year.

f) Roger Green – Hedge in School Lane

Roger Green wrote on 27th March as follows.

'I do not know whether anyone else has pointed this out to you, but we are concerned about the state of the 'hedge' in School Lane, just opposite the field gate entrance to the play area. There is a wooden fence to the boundary of the property concerned but it has become completely obscured by a thick hedge of ivy, which is now impairing vision on this narrow bend. I do not know whose responsibility this is, but the rest of the hedges in School Lane have been trimmed back, except for this area.

To avoid any possible accidents on this virtually blind bend, we would-be grateful if you could look into the situation.'

The Clerk to write to Roger Green informing him that the responsibility is with the owner (Mr. Abel Smith) or tenant of this property and we suggest he writes to either of these.

Action: J. Allsop

g) Oliver Heald MP – River Beane

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter (dated 28th March) from Oliver Heald.

'Many thanks for your letter about the River Beane.

You are absolutely right that this is an important issue where political pressure is required. As you may know, I have recently had meetings with the Environment Agency and Three Valleys Water, to discuss the River Beane. Although the upper reaches are already dry, what concerns me is that Stevenage is set to expand hugely over coming years. It is simply unsustainable for the water to come from the River Beane. I am therefore pressing for solutions which will ensure that the River Beane is not seen as the main provider of water for future developments, and also that schemes such as the one you mention which are re-using cleaned water should be pursued.

I have also discussed with the Environment Agency and Three Valleys Water whether there is scope for some ponds to be created along the River Beane in order to maintain water capture.

Please be assured that I shall continue to press the case on this and I am in regular touch with both the main organisations involved.

I have also recently met Dave Stimpson to discuss the case.'

h) Flower Festival 2008 committee – request for grant

Mrs. McCash declared a personal interest in this item as she is on committee for the Flower Festival.

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter, dated 19th March, from Lyn Marsh (Watton-at-Stone Flower Festival Co-ordinators).

'Alexandra Abel-Smith and others from this Parish are intending to organise a Flower Festival in the Parish Church over the weekend 13/14th September 2008.

We would like this to be the new beginning of the annual event it used to be, but which has not been organised for the past 8 or more years.

We are hoping that the whole village will be involved in some way – including the Scouts, Guides and all the younger units of the village who will have the chance to enter a competition based on miniature gardens and/or collages.

The theme will be "Harvest" – and we hope to have a selection of farm animals on display. We also plan to have a tea tent and sell bread, eggs, cakes, jams and vegetables etc.

Since this is a community project we would be very grateful if the Parish Council would consider making a donation to the Flower Festival Group for us to be able to purchase flowers for the displays. We need to raise around £500 and wonder if you could add this request to your next agenda.

We look forward to hearing from you.'

The funds are needed for the initial set up of the Flower Festival with the intention that it will be self-financing next year.

Mr. Filer proposed we agree a grant of £100. Mrs. Dinnin seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

10 Reports from other Organisations

- **Churches Servicing Watton – Community Service Sunday 6th July 2008**

Mr. Poulton said that we had received a letter (dated 15th April) from Rodney Ranzetta, of the Churches Serving Watton, requesting the use of the Pavilion facilities and sportsfield for the Community Service to be held on Sunday 6th July 2008 at 1030. They will require the facilities from 0930 to 1200 at the latest.

Mr. Meischke proposed that the facilities be made available for the Community Service free of charge (as in the past). Mr. Knight seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

A letter to be sent to Rodney Ranzetta accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

The Cricket Club to be notified accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

- **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:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Pre-School Playgroup:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone School Governors:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Scout & Guide Group**
Mr. Stock will be attending the Scout & Guide Group AGM on 17th April.
- **Watton-at-Stone Sports & Social Club:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton Youth Drop Inn:** Nothing to report.
- **Police Authority:** Nothing to report
Refer to item 7 b, Specific items - Report on the launch of Hertfordshire's Policing plan for 2008/11.
- **River Beane Restoration Association:** Nothing to report.

11 Items for Parish News

The following items to be sent to the Editor of the Parish News for inclusion in the next issue.

- Replacement BT phone box
- River Beane.

Mr. Knight and the Clerk to write the entries accordingly.

Action: I. Knight/J. Allsop

Note: The Parish Council missed the deadline for the May issue of the Parish News and therefore these items will be included in the June issue.

- **The meeting closed at 2057.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 13th May 2008.**