

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 17th June 2008

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|----------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Present: | Mr. N. Poulton (Chairman) | Mr. J. Meischke (Vice-Chairman) |
| | Mr. C. Clark | 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 Mrs. Dinnin and Mr. Stock.

2 Public Participation

None.

3 Declaration of Interests

Mr. Knight declared a personal interest in item 9 b, Correspondence received - Ian Knight re planning consent for 14 Beane Road (Mr. Knight lives adjacent to the property involved).

4 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

Mr. Poulton had one additional item for this meeting.

- **DEFRA report**

We have received a survey from DEFRA for completion on any land we own under our DEFRA holding number.

Mr. Smith has looked at the survey form and confirmed that because we have no agricultural activities on any of our land there is no need for us to complete it.

5 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13th June 2008**

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

Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present at that meeting were in favour.

b) Review of actions

- **Donate lost property clothing items to charity: completed.**
- **Speak to Mrs. Abel Smith about Flower Festival cheque**
Mrs. McCash said that the cheque should be made payable to Mrs. Abel Smith. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Write article for Parish News: completed.**
- **Write to East Herts Council re planning application for 39b High Street: completed.**
- **Write to East Herts Council re planning application for 1-3 Mill Lane: completed.**
- **Write to East Herts Council re planning application for 14 Beane Road: completed.**
- **Complete Foundation Trust Status form for East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust: completed.**
- **Review content of the Village Directory: Refer to item 7 a, Specific items – Village Directory.**
- **Notify all Community Hall hirers to collect keys from Rosemary Brown: completed.**
- **Arrange for post to be delivered to John Meischke whilst Clerk is on holiday: completed.**
- **E-mail Parish Councillors copies of letters re Parish Council insurance: completed.**
- **Write to Allianz re Parish Council insurance policy**

Mr. Filer read out the following letter he sent to Allianz on 21st May.

‘I am writing on behalf of Watton-at-Stone Parish Council for which I am Chairman of the Budget & Finance Committee. I am also enclosing a cheque for £1274.52 together with the payment slip to cover insurance for the Parish Council up to 1 June 2009.

However the Parish Council has asked me to raise with you the fact that you have unilaterally increased the Long Term Undertaking (LUT), which expired on 01/06/2007 up to 01/06/2010. This was done without any reference to us, without our agreement, and without informing us of this fact other than to print it on page 2 of your Schedule (I enclose the relevant pages 2 of previous years outlining this change of LUT dates). As this change was not drawn to our attention at the time and was not noticed by us last year we do not feel bound by this new imposed date of 01/06 2010. We

will however, as a gesture of our good will, accept the LUT as being valid until the next renewal date of 01/06/2009.

Although we are at present satisfied with the insurance provided by Allianz, I am sure that you will recognize that as a public body we must reserve the right to go out on occasions for competitive bids and the existence of an LUT prevents us from doing this. I also suspect that this procedure is contrary to competition law and would not necessarily meet with the approval of the regulatory authorities.

I would value your comments on this matter.'

He then read out their reply dated 13th June.

'We acknowledge receipt of the letter from Denis Filer, together with the remittance in the sum of £1274.52 in respect of the 2008 renewal premium.

We are responding directly to you as clerk to the council and our usual correspondent.

The Long Term Undertaking was originally taken out on the 8th June 1992 and is automatically extended when it expires unless the Parish Council advises us otherwise. This is indicated on the policy renewal schedule at each renewal.

We trust this clarifies the situation and if we can be of further assistance please do not hesitate to contact us.'

Mr. Filer said he wanted advice on how to deal with this matter. Allianz give us a 5% discount for the long term agreement. However, Norwich Union was willing to better Allianz's premium by at least 15%. Mr. Harris said that because of the small amount involved it was not proportionate to make an issue out of this matter.

It was agreed to acknowledge receipt of Allianz's letter and inform them that we do not want to continue our agreement with them after 2010 but, in accordance with local government requirements, will be going out to tender.

Action: D. Filer

- **Pursue Parish Council insurance cover further as appropriate**
See above item.
- **Show Adam Welch what is required re the High Street flowerbed maintenance**
Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Flowerbed Maintenance.
- **Speak to Mr. Smith about weed-killing on the Lammas**
Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Lammas – Nettles.
- **Inform Scout and Guide group of clearance work to be done in Mill Lane and on the Lammas**
The Scout and Guide group have done some clearance work and have been thanked for the work done.
- **Speak to Adam Welch and Ted Brown re cutting of grass verges from School Lane to Rectory Lane: completed.**
- **Ask Ted Brown to trim around the benches and check to see if any of the benches need attention: completed.**
The Clerk said that Ted Brown did not identify any problems with the benches. Refer to item 8 b ii, Monthly village-report.
- **Inspect the kicker boards on the Church Walk side of the MPPA: outstanding.** **Action: I. Knight**
- **Inspect the War Memorial to see if it needs weeding**
Mr. Poulton confirmed that the War Memorial garden needs attention including the cutting of the berberis hedge. The Clerk to write to Adam Welch accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**
The Clerk to chase Hugh McAlpine, the stonemasons, re the War Memorial cleaning and repair work which was scheduled to be done in April 2008. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **E-mail a copy of letter from Mr. Welsh (16 Moorymead Close) to all Parish Councillors: completed.**
- **Terminate one of the Allotment holder's tenancy agreement with immediate effect: completed.**
To ensure its receipt, the letter of termination was sent out by recorded delivery.
- **Liaise over the facts of the Allotments bonfire incident: completed.**

c) Action points outstanding for more than two months

None.

6 Planning

a) Applications

i) 77 Hazeldell (3/08/0842/FP/MC)

Single storey front extension with 2 no. new windows to front

Mr. Meischke said that he, Mr. Stock and Mr. Harris had looked at the plans for this application and based on the Parish Council's policy to oppose garages being converted into living spaces, because it is likely to lead to increased parking either on-street or on the frontage of the site, agreed the Parish Council should object to this application.

Parish Councillors looked at the plans and agreed with this decision.

The Clerk to write to East Herts Council accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

ii) Land East of Walkern Road and North and West of High Elms Lane, Benington

3 no. wind turbines of up to 119m in height, a permanent meteorological mast, substation, access tracks and ancillary infrastructure

After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed to hold a Special Meeting of the Parish Council on Monday 14th July at 1900 in the Community Hall to discuss the Benington Wind Farm application.

Andrew Bott and a member of the Stop Benington Wind Farm Action Group to be invited to give presentations on the proposed planning application.

Action: N. Poulton

The meeting will then be closed to all members of the public to allow the Parish Council to discuss the proposed plans and make their decision on how to respond to the East Herts planners.

An insert will be placed in the Parish News informing all parishioners about the Special meeting.

Action: J. Allsop

b) Decisions

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

Replace window with French doors and full length windows. Create first floor balcony.

- Revised application

-East Herts Council Permission refused

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

Front and rear ground floor extensions

-East Herts Council Permission refused

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

Single storey rear extension

-East Herts Council Permission granted

iv) 14 Beane Road (3/08/0650/FP/SD)

One new detached three bedroom bungalow and double garage

-East Herts Council permission granted

7 Specific items

a) Village Directory

Mr. Meischke said that the Website Working-Group have been looking at three possible options for the Village Directory, however they were not in a position to present these options to this meeting.

After discussion it was agreed that this item be placed on the July agenda.

Agenda: 07/08

b) Update from Website Working-Group

Mr. Meischke said that the work is almost complete and would be ready to present to the Parish Council at its meeting in July.

Agenda: 07/08

c) BT phone box

Mr. Poulton confirmed that the replacement K6 style BT phone box has had the telephone equipment installed and is fully functional.

d) Date of April 2009 Parish Council meeting

Mr. Filer is unable to attend the Parish Council meeting set for 21st April 2009 and therefore would be unable to present the accounts for the year-end 31st March 2009 to the Parish Council.

It was agreed to change the meeting date from Tuesday 21st April 2009 to Thursday 23rd April 2009.

Parish Councillors agreed that the Parish Council meeting in May 2009 will be held on Tuesday 19th May 2009. This will be preceded by the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

e) E-mails from Mr. Cross re Scouts Activities

Mr. Poulton received several e-mails from Mr. Cross (77 High Street) concerning bonfires on the Abel Smith land adjacent to the Scout and Guide hut. These bonfires were causing problems to residents in the High Street. Mr. Poulton asked Mr. Cross to contact Chris Kitts at East Herts Council. This action seems to have resolved the problems.

On Saturday 31 May, Mr. Cross e-mailed again to say his partner had to speak to someone from the Scout Group who was spraying herbicide along the river bank. This person did stop spraying when asked. Mr. Poulton suggested that Mr. Cross contact Chris Kitts again to ask his advice as to what action should be taken. Mr. Poulton said he did not know the outcome of this action as no further e-mails have been received from Mr. Cross since 31st May.

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

Recorded delivery postage re Sarah Cullen

0.72

0.72

Cheques required

Allianz

Insurance premium

1274.52

Ted Brown

Strimming

40.00

Ted Brown

32 hours litterpick

232.00

J. A. Morrissey

Internal audit fee

100.00

Frank Cooper & son

Sportsfield grass cutting

229.13

Tim Clark

Clearance work on Parish Council land at Rivershill

75.00

Ted Brown

Strimming and grass cutting

100.00

J. Allsop

June salary

585.08

2635.73

Cheques received

H. M. Revenue & Customs

VAT rebate

1350.62

1350.62

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash

Receipts

Floodlighting to 13/05/08

80.00

Jim Keen – Main hall hire in April

100.00

Watton Dots & Tots – Pavilion hire

70.00

250.00

Payments

Rosemary Brown – hirers key collection

50.00

HCC – First aid kit

25.90

75.90

Cheques required

R. Adams

External decoration work

890.00

Lock Stock and Barrell

Free-up lock on external door (car park side)

70.50

McCash and Hay

Annual Audit

115.15

Rosemary Brown

18 hours cleaning

168.00

John Philllips

Toilet opening duties – 1st April to 13th June

74.00

1317.65

Cheques received

Beane Valley Children's Centre

Pavilion hire

176.40

J. B. Chastell

Pavilion hire

35.00

Miss Lyons

Main Hall and Pavilion hire

38.00

Watton Youth Drop Inn

Main Hall and Pavilion hire

397.80

647.20

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

- **Asset register**

All Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of the asset register updated by Mr. Poulton and the Clerk.

Mr. Poulton said he felt it was essential that the asset register was brought up-to-date.

The register is loosely based on insurance valuations. However some items are no longer listed on our current insurance policy (e.g. dog-waste bins and rubbish bins) but are still included on the asset register as they are an asset. Mr. Poulton explained that the reason they were removed from the insurance schedule was because their individual values were well below the insurance excess for each claim.

Mr. Poulton suggested that Parish Councillors keep the asset register in their Parish Council starter kit files.

Community Hall Trustees

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

- **Acoustic panels**

Mr. Poulton has now completed and submitted the East Herts Council grant application form. An outcome should be known in July.

As agreed during the May 2008 Parish Council meeting, if the grant application is unsuccessful we will not proceed with the acoustic installation until an alternative grant is obtained.

- **Safety inspection**

The annual inspection of the fire equipment is now due. Mr. Poulton has left a message with the Herts Fire Protection asking them to do the inspection as soon as possible.

Mr. Poulton to chase.

Action: N. Poulton

The electrical inspection done by Keith Burgess is due in September. It was agreed to get the boiler and heating service done by James Turner during September.

Action: J. Allsop/09.08

Recreation & Amenities

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

- **MPPA Floodlighting**

Mr. Knight said he had met with CU Phosco who are unable to replace the broken parts on the floodlighting units. Floodlighting Limited, who installed the original floodlighting system, have also been contacted but is also doubtful that they can obtain parts for repairing the units.

Both companies are able to supply quotations for new replacement heads of the same type that will used on the new single tennis court.

Mr. Knight said that although 3 out of the 8 floodlighting units are damaged, all 8 are currently working.

- **Playing field**

The Parish Council should receive the Glebe Committee's decision re its request to lease additional land for sporting facilities in June.

Environment

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

- **Grass cutting – Watton Green and the Lammas**

Blue Bury contractors have started the grass cutting work and plan to take the cuttings off site this week.

Mr. Filer said that there are a large amount of nettles in the Watton Green woods adjacent to his driveway.

Mr. Filer left the meeting while this item was discussed.

After discussion, it was agreed that it was the responsibility of the Parish Council to clear the nettles.

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Smith to make a site visit to see what action should be taken.

Action: N. Poulton/M. Smith

Mr. Filer returned to the meeting.

- **Lammas**

- **Trees**

Two trees on the riverbank overhanging the garden of 20 Lammas Road are at a precarious angle overhanging the river. Mr. Poulton reminded Parish Councillors that the Environment Agency has informed us that it is the land owners responsibility to clear fallen trees from the waterways.

It was agreed to write to Adam Welch asking him to provide a quotation to cut down the two trees and remove them from site.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Scout's work**

Refer to item 5 b, Review of actions - Inform Scout and Guide group of clearance work to be done in Mill Lane and on the Lammas.

- **Nettles**

Mr. Smith to cut the nettles by the gate and the steps to the Lammas bank.

Action: M. Smith

- **Flowerbed Maintenance**

All the flowerbeds in High Street require attention, in particular the War Memorial garden (including the cutting back of the berberis hedge) and the two small flowerbeds at the bottom of Great Innings/High Street plus the flowerbed opposite the Waggon and Horses public house.

Adam Welch is away on holiday until 24th June. Mrs. Dinnin has drafted a letter to be sent to Adam Welch informing him of the work required.

Action: J. Allsop

b) Routine reports

i) Fire-alarm test

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

ii) Monthly village-report

Mr. Filer completed this report on the 15th and 16th June 2008, the result of which is as follows.

- **Sportsfield:**

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|--------------------|--|
| Condition of grass | Very good. |
| Litter | None. |
| Dog fouling | None. |
| General | Jack Turner bench needs attention Rubbish (wood) around brick hut. Grass well cut. Bird lime on Paul Hart bench. Wire mesh fencing needs repair (near site screens). |

- **Children's Play Area:**

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Condition of surface | Good. |
| Litter/Litterbin | OK – ½ full. |
| Large swings | Good. |
| Small swings | OK. |
| See-Saw | OK. |
| Rainbow multi-play and slide | OK. |
| Two spring sit-on | OK. |
| Teen shelter | OK. |
| General | Good condition. |
- **Bike ramps area:**

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

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| General Condition (Exterior) | OK. |
| Litterbin | Empty. |
| Car Park | OK. |
| General | Good condition – no litter. |
- **Multi-Purpose Play Area:**

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|------------------|------------------------|
| Surface | Good. |
| Boundary Fencing | OK. |
| Tennis nets | Both OK. |
| Litter | None. |
| General | Boot brush quite worn. |
- **Great Innings Play Area:**

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|-------------|--|
| Equipment | Split on the seat of a child swing. |
| Surfaces | Some litter on grassed area. |
| Litter | Litter bin half full. |
| Dog fouling | None. |
| Trees | OK. |
| Comments | Looks like new rubber on some play surfaces. |
- **Allotments Area:**

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Access | Good – lock on gate. |
| Condition of paths between Allotments | Good, but some need strimming. |
| Condition of Allotments under cultivation | Good. |
| Condition of Allotments not under cultivation | Very poor. |
| Litter | OK. |
| Comments | Generally reasonable condition. |
- **Culverts on Mill Lane**

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|---|---------------------|
| Litter and rubbish in and around Culverts | None. |
| Dog-fouling | OK. |
| Comments | Nettles everywhere. |
- **Salt bins**

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|---|---------|
| Perrywood Lane | ¾ full. |
| Entrance to Great Innings | Full. |
| Great Innings South – outside number 93 | Full. |

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| Station Road | Full. |
| Moorymead Close (2) | Full + ¾ full. |
| Hazeldell | Full. |
| Footpath 17 | Full (more rubbish on ground than in litter bin_. |
| Beane Road | ¾ full. |
- **Dog-waste bins**

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Footpath 17 | OK. |
| Sportsfield | OK but lid broken and smelly. |
| Church Walk | OK. |
| Walkern Road | Lid missing completely. |
| Station Road | OK. |
| High Street (by Memorial) | OK. |
| Great Innings | OK. |
| Mill Lane | OK. |
| Opposite 5 School Lane | OK. |
 - **War Memorial**

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|----------|-------------------|
| Comments | Rubbish bin full. |
|----------|-------------------|
 - **Ornate Village Sign**

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| Comments | OK. |
| Post | OK. |
 - **Jack turner bench**

Mr. Filer said the Jack Turner bench is lose in its foundations and he thought some extra concrete was needed to secure it. Mr. Smith, Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke to inspect directly after this meeting to ascertain what work needs doing. **Action: M. Smith/N. Poulton/J. Meischke**
 - **Cricket Club building**

Mr. Knight to ask the Cricket Club to clear the debris from around the Cricket shed, plus the wire netting. **Action: I. Knight**
 - **Ladies toilet**

Ask Rosemary Brown to renew the toilet paper in the ladies toilets, if she has not already done so. **Action: N. Poulton**
 - **Bird lime on bench**

Mr. Poulton agreed to inspect and take action as necessary. **Action: N. Poulton**
 - **Bike ramps**

Mr. Poulton to inspect the graffiti on the bike ramps to see if it can be removed. **Action: N. Poulton**
 - **Nettles in culverts**

It was agreed not to remove the nettles around the culverts.
- iii) Weekly sportsfield-report and action**
Nothing to report.
- **Ted and Rosemary Brown - holiday**

The Clerk said that Ted and Rosemary Brown are going away for one week at the end of next week. However, she did not have the exact dates.
Note: Mr. Poulton e-mailed all Parish Councillors informing them that Ted and Rosemary Brown's holiday dates are 28th June to 5th July. He suggested that unless councillors instructed otherwise he would not get anyone to do their work as they were only away for one week.

9 Correspondence received

a) Malcolm and Lyn Oakman re planning consent for 14 Beane Road

Mr. Poulton said that we are in receipt of letters from Malcolm and Lyn Oakman and Ian Knight regarding concerns about upholding the planning consent conditions, especially item 7 of the planning decision. A copy of the planning decision is attached to these minutes. **See attached**

Susie Defoe, the East Herts Council planning officer in charge of this case, has been sent an e-mail asking her to clarify the situation and we await her comments. This item to remain on the agenda. **Agenda: 07/07**

The Clerk to send all Parish Councillors a copy of the planning decision. **Action: J. Allsop**

b) Letter from Ian Knight re planning consent for 14 Beane Road

See item 9 a, Correspondence received - Malcolm and Lyn Oakman re planning consent for 14 Beane Road.

c) East Herts Council – Annual Playground inspections

East Herts Council wrote on 23rd May to advise the Parish Council that the annual playground inspection's are due to take place from the second week in July and the contractor commissioned to carry-out this inspection is The Play Inspection Company Limited. The cost is £47.99 (excluding VAT) per play area.

Each inspection will be fully compliant with current European Standards and the basic Disability Discriminating Act. Photographs and information about specific faults will be provided in each report.

Mrs. McCash proposed we ask East Herts Council to instruct The Play Inspection Company to carry out our annual inspection of the playground equipment on the sportsfield. Mr. Meischke seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: J. Allsop

d) Out2Play Scheme - summer play scheme

Mr. Poulton received a request from Andrew Anastasiou, who wants to run a summer playscheme on Mondays in Watton-at-Stone between 1600 and 1755 starting on 21st July and finishing on 18th August. He requests the use of the MPPA and playing field at the Great Innings play area.

The primary purpose of the Out2Play Scheme project is to address one of the top barriers to outdoor play which is understood to be parental anxiety from parents about letting children play freely outside. Therefore the project aims to:

1. To offer **free** outdoor play opportunities that are safe and welcoming and close to home
2. To provide an opportunity for children to meet up with friends and have fun
3. To skill up parents/carers to run local schemes
4. To provide opportunities for more exciting play in more 'wild areas' of public open space

With these potential outcomes:

- Children will have more choice and control over their play.
- Children will acquire greater social skills and respect for others through play.
- Children will be able to test boundaries, be challenged and take risks through play while kept safe from harm.
- Children will achieve greater independence and self-esteem through play.

The Out2Play Scheme will provide equipment for children to play with, such as ball games, skipping, tag, parachute games, arts and crafts, and junk modelling. Children will be able to choose what to do and will have the reassurance of a responsible adult for help and support if required. It is hoped that the team will be able to offer the provision on 'wilder' sites and facilitate exploration of the natural environment during the duration of the project.

All staff will have experience of the managing children in this age range, and will be liaising with parents and local groups to develop the interest for this type of play provision. A taster session on the training will be offered to local residents who are interested in the provision.

Parish Councillors agreed that they were happy for the MPPA facilities to be used, however they cannot comment on the use of the Great Innings play area as it is not in their ownership.

Mr. Poulton to notify Andrew Anastasiou accordingly.

Action: N. Poulton

e) East Herts Council re planning application for 1-3 Mill Lane

Mr. Poulton read out two e-mails from Hazel Summerfield (East Herts Council planning officer) dated 19th and 29th May as follows.

'Sorry for not getting back to you yet on the 1-3 Mill Lane application. We would have to consider whether it is reasonable to condition hours of use when the building is already lawfully a commercial use. Construction hour restriction can certainly be considered – Environmental Health has been consulted.

With regards to parking, our maximum parking standards would apply based on floorspace calculations. Sorry but I haven't done the calculations yet. Highways have also been consulted.

Hope that clarifies some points.'

'Further to my last email on the 19th May, we have received comments back from County Highways who would not object to a B1 use of the building, but recommend refusal for B2 or B8 on the grounds of access and parking for large vehicles. On the basis of a B1 use, our Parking Standards suggest a maximum of 1 space per 30-35m² floorspace. For the gross 644m² proposed I calculate this to be a maximum of 18-21 spaces. This is a maximum figure and consideration would also be given to the location of the site and suitable public transport connections (i.e. bus and train).'

No decision on the application has yet been made by East Herts Council.

f) E-mail from East Herts Council re meeting for The Local Development Framework on Wednesday 25th June

All Parish Councillors were e-mailed the details of the East Herts Council meeting to discuss the Local Development Framework and Mr. Filer agreed to attend.

Action: D. Filer

Mr. Poulton said that this is a very important meeting as it will decide where an additional 3,600 houses, due to be built before 2011, will be located in East Herts. Because Watton-at-Stone has such excellent services (e.g. road and railway services) it is very likely that a significant amount of the housing will be within our parish. This could be as much as an additional 500 properties but Mr. Poulton hoped this figure could be reduced to approximately 200. These figures are over and above the development proposals for the Hertfordshire County Council land opposite the station.

g) Letter from Vernon Dunhill

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter (dated 30th May) from Vernon Dunhill.

‘I must take exception to the statement in the Parish Report for the Year 2007/2008 that I resigned from the Parish Council.

As you know, I completed the term of office as a Member of the Parish Council for which I was elected. On completion of that term I chose not to stand in the next election.

Presumably Mr. Harris was cop-opted onto the Parish Council to fill the vacancy created as a consequence of insufficient candidates being nominated at that election.

I trust the record will be corrected in due course.’

Mr. Poulton then read out his reply dated 14th June.

‘I thank you for your letter of the 30th May and I’m sorry it has taken a time for me to respond but Ann and I have been in America visiting our daughter and family for the last three weeks.

I must apologise for the incorrect statement in the Parish Report for the Year 2007/2008, you are perfectly correct in that you did not resign but decided not to stand for re-election.

I will ensure that your letter will be placed on the June agenda of the Parish Council when the record will be set straight.

Can I take this opportunity of thanking you again for the service you gave to the village during your terms of office.’

It was agreed to place a retraction notice in the July issue of the Parish News. Refer to item 11, Items for Parish News.

10 Village organisations

- **Watton Youth Drop Inn**

Mr. Poulton reminded Parish Councillors that the Watton Youth Drop Inn will hold its last meeting on 16th July before closing for the summer holidays and will re-open on 3rd September.

The Club is going well and has between 20 to 30 youths aged between 7 and 14 year attending on a regular basis. All parents are advised that the Watton Youth Drop Inn is not a child minding agency and that there is no authority to stop children leaving the Community Hall building. However, they are looked after whilst they are in the Community Hall.

- **Watton green**

Mr. Filer reported that the fence on the far side of Watton Green has been demolished and he has reported the incident to the police. This fence was put up to stop vehicles from entering Watton Green via Watton yard.

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Smith to inspect and take action as necessary.

Action: N. Poulton/M. Smith

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

Mr. Clark confirmed that due to ill health, Sarah Davies has retired from the position of Chair to the Governors. The Vice-chair is now acting Chair.

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

Mrs. McCash said that the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Watch meeting held on 11th June was a great success. Inspector John Speed and PCSO Paul Weston spoke on rural policing.

The lack of police presence in the village is as a result of low levels of reported crime.

Mrs. McCash said she has won the East Herts Neighbourhood Watch Award and been nominated by PC Andy Woodward and PCSO Paul Weston for the Safer Neighbourhood Awards 2008.

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

Mr. Meischke said that all of the allotment plots are currently being cultivated. However, due to a waiting list there is a need to create some more plots from the unused area.

Mr. Meischke and Mr. Smith to inspect the area to see how best the unused area can be cleared.

Action: J. Meischke/M. Smith

- **Watton-at- Watton-at-Stone Memorial Hall Management Committee:** Nothing to report.
- **Stone Pre-School Playgroup:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Scout & Guide Group:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Sports & Social Club:** Nothing to report.
- **Police Authority:** Nothing to report.
- **River Beane Restoration Association:** Nothing to report.

11 Items for Parish News

The following item to be sent to the Editor of the Parish News for inclusion in the July issue.

- Special Parish Council meeting to discuss Benington Wind Farm application on Monday 14th July at 1900 in the Community Hall.
- Apology to Vernon Dunhill

The Clerk to write the entry accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

- **The meeting closed at 2104.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 15th July 2008.**