

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 17th March 2009

Present: Mr. N. Poulton (Chairman) Mr. C. Clark
 Mrs. C. Dinnin (after 19.38 hrs) Mr. I. Harris
 Mr. D. Filer Mr. I. Knight
 Mrs. McCash Mr. M. Smith
 Mr. D. Stock The Clerk (Mrs. J. Allsop) until 20.45 hrs

Member of public: Mr. E. Riddle (until 20.45 hrs)

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. J. Meischke.

2 Public Participation

None.

3 Declaration of Interests

Mr. Knight declared a personal interest in the following items.

- 6 a iii, Planning Application – 14a Beane Road (Mr. Knight lives adjacent to the property involved)
- 9 a, Correspondence received - River Beane Restoration Association – River Beane Environmental improvement.

Mrs. Dinnin declared a personal interest in item 6 a iii, Planning Application - 14a Beane Road (Mrs. Dinnin lives in the same road as the property involved).

Mr. Stock declared a personal interest in item 6 a ii, Planning Application – 142 Hazeldell (Mr. Stock is a friend of the applicant).

Mr. McCash declared a pecuniary interest in item 6 a ii, Planning Application – 142 Hazeldell (The applicant is a client of Mrs. McCash).

Although she is not covered by the code of conduct, the Clerk declared a personal interest in 6 a iii, Planning Application – 14a Beane Road (The Clerk lives in the same road as the property involved).

4 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

Mr. Poulton had five additional items for this meeting.

• **Date of April Parish Council meeting**

Mr. Poulton reminded Parish Council that our next meeting is not on the third Tuesday of the month, but on the Thursday, 23rd April.

• **Letter from Mike Inman**

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter he had received from Mike Inman (16 Rivershill).

‘I would like to bring to your attention the barrier on the East side of Watton Green. Last summer some youths that were camping on the green tore down the wooden barrier to burn on their fire. A single post is still standing.

The reason I am reporting this again, is because last week I saw two men in an old van looking at the gap and discussing the access. I am sure they were from the travelling community as they picked up some scrap metal that was lying around.

Could you get the Parish Council to reinstate the barrier, possible made of metal, i.e. scaffold poles.’

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Smith have looked at the gap and felt that it would be impossible to get through with a vehicle. However, Mr. Smith has installed a post and rail barrier across the gap. Mr. Poulton thanked Mr. Smith for doing the work so quickly.

Mr. Poulton to write to Mr. Inman accordingly.

Action: N. Poulton

• **Donation from Frances and David Taylor**

Mr. Poulton read out a letter of thanks dated 17th March from Frances and David Taylor enclosing a donation of £200 and thanking the Parish Council for the licence on the land adjacent to their property, Beane Cottage in Walkern Road.

Mr. Poulton to send a letter of thanks to Frances and David Taylor.

Action: N. Poulton

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

The annual CPRE subscription for 2009/10 is up by £1 to £29.

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

Action: J. Allsop

• **Zurich Insurance renewal for community hall**

Refer to item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee.

5 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 17th February 2009**
Mrs. McCash proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.
Mr. Smith seconded the motion and all present at that meeting were in favour.

b) Review of actions

- **Contact Glyn Day re Enterprise lorries at Perrywood Farm before end of February**
Mr. Poulton said he had spoken with Charles Allingham (East Herts Council). Evidently all the equipment and machinery is still at the farm but the contractor has gone out of business and Mr. Borlase is holding onto the equipment as security for money he is owed.
Mr. Borlase has also purchased the scaffolding belonging to this company to refurbish some of the farms buildings. He is also making enquiries as to the future potential use of these buildings.
Mr. Poulton said he believed that Perrywood Farm was owned by the Abel Smith estate.
Mr Allingham is meeting Mr. Borlase next week to get an update on the situation and Mr. Poulton will inform Parish Councillors on the outcome of this meeting. **Action: N. Poulton**
- **Decide best relocation position for the Byelaw sign on the Lammas**
Refer to item 8 a, East Herts Council - Byelaw sign on the Lammas.
- **Arrange For the MPPA fencing to be professionally repair: outstanding** **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Ask Michael Lewis to lubricate all the locks in the Community Hall with WD40: completed.**
Mr. Poulton said that the locks were easier to operate.
- **Write to planning department re 27 High Street: completed.**
- **Contact all organisations listed in the Village Directory to check their details are correct**
Refer to item 7 c, Specific items - Village Directory.
- **Ask Ted Brown to trim back branches overhanging the allotment hedge: completed.**
- **Contact Raj Goutam (Hertfordshire Highways) – Hockerill hedge: completed.**
Refer to item 7 d, Specific items – Hedges in the village.
- **Contact Hertfordshire County Council re lighting energy and maintenance charges**
Mr. Filer contacted Hertfordshire County Council and received the same information as the Clerk had obtained. Hertfordshire County Council came to the end of a 2-year contract and were offered a very high price for electricity in October last year and therefore renewed on a one-year contract only. They expect that in October 2009, when a new contract is agreed, our energy costs will drop.
- **Obtain gas prices for a new contract for Community Hall**
Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall Trustees.
- **Arrange for the Sports and Social Club hire agreement to be signed**
Refer to item 8 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee - Sports and Social Club hire agreement.
- **Contact the Countryside Management Service to arrange a meeting to discuss the 2009/2010 work plans: completed.**
Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Meeting with the Countryside Management Service re the Parish Paths Partnership grant.
- **Inspect waterlogged area by cricket table water valve**
Mr. Knight said that the area by the cricket table water valve was not waterlogged when he inspected it. He believed that excessive rainfall had caused the original problem.
- **Inspect small surface holes in MPPA surface**
Mr. Knight said that no action is currently needed. He will inspect the area again when the weather is dryer and believed the holes have been caused by BMX bikes.
- **Inspect the ivy on the Mill Lane Bridge during their site visit of the Lammas: competed,**
Refer to item below.
- **Contact Raj Goutam (Hertfordshire Highways) re ivy on the Mill Lane Bridge**
Mr. Poulton said that Raj Goutam has been made aware that the ivy on the bridge needs removing. However, Hertfordshire Highways do not consider this an urgent item and therefore the ivy will be removed when a maintenance team is next in this area.
- **Contact the Clerk re invitation to the 2009 Inter Parish Conference**
Refer to item 7 g, Specific items - Verbal report on 2009 Inter Parish Conference held on 16th March .
- **Write to Aston Parish Council re 2009 Inter Parish Conference: completed.**
- **Write to the Methodist Church re building fund: completed.**

- **Attend the Launch of Hertfordshire's Policing Plan and return acceptance forms**
Mrs. McCash has returned the acceptance forms and will be attending the Launch on Friday 27th March.
- **Obtain application forms for Community Planning Grant and pass to Mr. Meischke**
The Clerk has passed the Community Planning Grant application forms for 2009/10 to Mr. Meischke. There are no funds available for 2008/09.
- **Write to Raj Goutam (Hertfordshire Highways) re salt bins for Rivershill: completed.**
- **Write to Mr. Preston re request for salt bins for Rivershill: completed.**
- **Contact Jim Morrissey regarding the timescale of the 2008/09 audit: completed.**
Refer to item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee - Audit of Parish Council accounts.
- **Contact the Clerk to discuss her salary and contract of employment: completed.**
Refer to item 12, Clerks salary and conditions of employment.

c) Action points outstanding for more than two months

None.

6 Planning

a) Applications

i) 142 Hazeldell (3/09/0236/FP/JS)

Rear conservatory

Mrs. McCash and Mr. Stock said that this application is retrospective because the conservatory has been built for some months.

Parish Councillors looked at the plans and agreed to write to East Herts Council informing them that they have no comment on the application. However, they would like the planning department to clarify why, when the conservatory was built several months ago, there is no indication in the planning application paperwork that this is a retrospective planning application.

Action: J. Allsop

ii) Tudor Cottage, Whempstead Road, Whempstead (3/09/0284/FP/JS)

Replacement of existing outbuildings

Mr. Clark said that the original plans were refused in January 2009. The new outbuildings are one-metre narrower than the previous application. They cannot be viewed from the roadside and do not affect the neighbouring residents.

Parish Councillors looked at the plans and agreed to write to East Herts Council informing them that they have no comment on the application.

Action: J. Allsop

Mrs. Dinnin arrived at the meeting.

iii) 14a Beane Road (3/09/0228/FP/SD)

One new detached four bedroom bungalow and double garage

New application for 4 bedroom bungalow

In February 2008, planning permission was granted to build a new two-bedroom bungalow with a room in the roof. In June 2008, planning permission was granted to build a new three-bedroom bungalow. There were no bedrooms in the roof of this application.

The latest application is for a four bedroom bungalow with a bedroom and bathroom in the roof.

Mr. Poulton read out letters from Mr. Knight and Malcolm and Lyn Oakman to East Herts Council objecting to the proposed new dwelling

Parish Councillors studied the plans and agreed to write as follows.

The Watton-at-Stone Parish Councillors strongly object to the application for the following reasons.

- It is an inappropriate level of development in an area of special restraint.
- It is an overdevelopment of the site.
- Restricted site access.

Also in addition to the points raised above, there appear to be several inaccuracies in the application. Firstly, the reference to a private driveway, which has no registered owner and is used by the owners of the three garages at the furthest end of the driveway. Secondly, the application refers to the 'rarely used' garages when in fact they are in daily use by residents of Beane Road. Both these comments are very misleading. In the light of the strong objection made by residents of Beane Road, the Parish Council has asked its District Councillor, Nigel Poulton, to request that this application, if the planning officer concerned wishes to approve the application, goes before the planning committee and is not decided by officer.

Action: J. Allsop

iv) Heath Mount School, Woodhall Park

Directional signage

This application is for improved signage on both directions of the A602, to help visitors find the entrance to Heath Mount School.

Parish Councillors looked at the plans and agreed to write to East Herts Council informing them that they have no comment on the application. **Action: J. Allsop**

v) 70 Hazeldell (3/09/0235/FP/MC)

Single storey front extension

Converting the garage into a small living room

Parish Councillors looked at the plans and agreed to write to East Herts Council as follows.

- The Parish Council strongly objects to the principal of a garage being converted into living accommodation.
 - The development would ultimately lead to an increase in on-street parking in an area that is already overburdened with on-street parking.
- Action: J. Allsop**

b) Decisions

None.

7 Specific items

a) Error in January 2009 Parish Council Minutes

The following error appeared on page 8 of the January 2009 Parish Council minutes. Final paragraph of item 9 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Trees in Hazeldell.

‘Mr. Stock to discuss this subject with our MP (Oliver Heald) during his surgery on 21st February.’

Should read

‘Mr. Stock to discuss this subject with our MP (Oliver Heald) during his surgery on 21st March.’

b) Report from Allotment Management Group

The Allotment Management Group met on Monday 9th March to discuss the following items

- a) Licence terms and list of holder responsibilities
- b) Schedule of hedge, grass cutting and inspection
- c) Uncultivated plots and boarders policy
- d) Special attention to rights of way paths
- e) Bylaws, Signs and Parking issues
- f) Provision for development of new plots and maintenance
- g) Policy document for future management stability
- h) To present plan to full council for approval

The Allotment Management Group’s recommendation to the Parish Council is that a letter to be sent to all allotment holders advising them of the increase in allotment rent and attaching the following document

Expectations/Explanations

We will endeavour to advise you of rent increases for 1st October by 31st March of that year

If you have any complaints pertaining to the allotments please write in the first instance to the clerk of the PC with details. We will select Parish Councillors to respond to your complaints within 7 days.

Please read the signs on the allotments.

Failure to pay the rent after 40 days from 1st October (refer to item 1 of the Tenancy agreement) will be followed up by a reminder letter. If after 7 days no communication has been received the plot will be reallocated.

Keeping the plot clear from weeds and maintaining it in good order (refer to items 3 and 7 of the tenancy agreement) and to tend the borders and walk ways surrounding your Plot. Where plots are adjoining, it becomes a joint responsibility, so please talk to your neighbours before any maintenance is carried out.

The Parish Council will inspect the allotments every month and if any plots are in a poor condition for over two months, a letter will be sent to you reminding you of your obligations and giving you a further three months to put your allotment in order (refer to item 1, Termination of The Tenancy).

An insurance policy is in force, taken out by the Allotment and Garden Association and paid for by the Parish Council. It gives public liability cover for all allotment holders whether they are a member of the Allotment and Garden Association or not.

This was agreed by Parish Councillors. The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

The Allotment Management Group also recommends that instead of erecting signs numbering the plots, a map identifying the location of each plot is installed on the allotments. This was agreed by Parish Councillors.

It was agreed that the £200 donation received from Frances and David Taylor (refer to item 4, Chairman's/Clerk's Report) be put towards the installation of the new sign.

Mr. Meischke to agree the design of the map, which will be based on the Allotment map drawn-up by Roger Green.

Action: J. Meischke

c) Village Directory

The Village Directory will be ready for distribution as an insert in the April edition of the Parish News. The Clerk to use the Parish News photocopy machine to print the Village Directory.

Action: J. Allsop

d) Hedges in the village

Mr. Poulton said that the Hockerill hedge adjacent to Old School Orchard has been cut back by Hertfordshire Highways and looks excellent. He thanked Mr. Smith for his involvement in acting as an intermediary.

e) Watton Website

Mr. Stock said that progress remained frustratingly slow and that the time and effort involved in originating the website and its content, and building/populating the website itself had been far in excess of that anticipated. In addition to material outstanding, delays have also been due to some inefficiencies experienced during the development phase of the website.

In terms of its sections, the website is approximately 90% complete.

The following is a record of the current state of the website.

- The 'development' version of the website is available and can be viewed on-line by Parish Councillors (the address can be obtained from Mr. Stock).
- Additional photographs are currently being added so that as many pages as possible contain an appropriate picture(s).
- Mr. Stock will take further photographs during the Spring so that we can get a suitable image for the website banner.
- Due to other commitments, Mr. Harris is now unable to find the time to prepare the History section. However, a lesser version could be produced using the appropriate parts of the Village Guide on the old website.
- The Whempstead section and the section on Education are still awaited from Mr. Clark.
- The Neighbourhood Watch section and the section on Healthcare are still awaited from Mrs. McCash.
- The Maps and the Public Footpaths sections are not assigned to anyone at present.
- The Scouts and Guides Hut section has been removed from the website.
- Despite numerous attempts to get input, the Peacemakers section remains as 'Information Awaited'.
- Once finalised, the latest edition of the Village Directory will be copied into the website.
- The Gallery can be added and developed at any time.

Action: C. Clark

Action: H. McCash

Having written or edited all of the sections completed so far, Mr. Stock said he now has less time to spend on the task and asked if anyone was prepared to take-on any of the unassigned sections so that we can make a near-complete website available to the public very soon.

It was suggested that Mr. Dunhill may be able to help with the Maps and Public Footpaths sections (when on the Parish Council he was involved with both subjects).

Mr. Dunhill to be contacted to see if he can help.

Action: D. Stock

Mr. Poulton said that Mr. Meischke had been given some text on the history of Watton-at-Stone. Work on this section remains unassigned but Mr. Stock to contact Mr. Meischke re what information he has.

Action: D. Stock

f) Jack Turner seat on sportsfield

Mr. Poulton said that the Jack Turner seat has been removed and is not going to be replaced.

Mrs. McCash said that the seat's two metal supports are sticking out of the ground and were a potential trip hazard. There is also a large hole in the hedge at this point and now that the seat has been removed, is being used as a short cut to and from School Lane.

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Smith agreed to inspect the site and take action as necessary.

Action: N. Poulton/M. Smith

g) Verbal report on 2009 Inter Parish Conference held on 16th March

Mr. Poulton said that rather than giving a verbal report on the 2009 Inter Parish Conference, he had produced a three page report with supporting documents, which has been placed on circulation.

Mr. Clark was unable to attend the conference.

Mr. Poulton said that the conference was poorly attended with only seven Parish Councils present. The two items on the agenda were Parish Plans and housing.

h) Holiday dates

Mr. Poulton reminded Parish Councillors to give all their holiday dates to the Clerk as soon as they know them.

Mr. Poulton has approved the following holiday dates for the Clerk.

- Friday 10th April to Saturday 18th April.

8 Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

Mr. Filer reported on the following items.

- **Monthly accounts**

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash

Receipts

None

Payments

Stamps 12 x 36p

4.32

4.32

Cheques issued

East Herts Council	Empty 3 dog waste bins from 1.04.08 – 31.03.09	484.38
Ted Brown	Various works to Allotments, War Memorial and Village Pump	24.00
Hertfordshire County Council	Velcro dots	17.32
Greenwood Tree Care	Leaf clearance work	150.00
Methodist Church	Grant	75.00
Ted Brown	32 hours litterpick	232.00
N. Poulton	1 st call signs – repair the Lammas byelaw sign	20.70
H B Thompson	24 hours cleaning	168.00
J. Allsop	Phone charges – January, February and March	56.85
J. Allsop	March salary	594.94
Post Office Limited	HM Revenue and Customs - Tax and NI	<u>221.16</u>
		<u>2044.35</u>

Cheques received

Steve Milne	Allotment rent 2008/09	8.00
Mr. & Mrs. Taylor	Donation	<u>200.00</u>
		<u>208.00</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash

Receipts

Floodlighting to 17 th March 2009	126.00
Dots and Tots- Main Hall & Pavilion	37.00
Ruth Hamilton – Pavilion hire	45.50
Kelly Edwards Main Hall & Pavilion	52.00
Steve Ellis – Main Hall hire	8.00
Jim Keen – Main Hall – 6 weeks	<u>80.00</u>
	<u>348.50</u>

Payments

HCC – cleaning material	30.89
R. Brown 11 th – 13 th February	28.00
R. Brown 18 th – 20 th February	28.00
R. Brown 25 th – 27 th February	28.00
R. Brown 4 th – 6 th March	<u>28.00</u>
	<u>142.89</u>

Cheques issued

Hertfordshire County Council	Cleaning materials	92.07
Floodlighting Limited	Supply and fit 8 new floodlights to existing column	5545.30
Parish Council	Reimbursement for H. B. Thompson – cleaning at Community Hall	<u>168.00</u>
		<u>5805.37</u>

Cheques received

None

Note:

The cheque for £82.95 issued in February 2009 to Russell Scanlan for public liability insurance on the Allotments should have been made payable to the Watton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association. A replacement cheque has not been issued.

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

- **Audit of Parish Council accounts**

It was agreed to re-appoint Mr. Jim Morrissey to carry-out the internal audit of the Parish Council accounts.

Mr. Filer said that Mr. Morrissey will take two to three days to do the internal audit of the Parish Council accounts as soon as Clerk gives him the paperwork.

- **Audit of Community Hall accounts**

It was agreed to re-appoint McCash and Hay to carry-out the audit of the Community Hall accounts.

- **Village hall insurance**

Mr. Filer proposed that we renew our insurance cover with the Zurich Village Halls Plus Group at a cost of £2896.06. Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **BDO Stoy Hayward**

Mr. Filer reported during the February Parish Council meeting that BDO Stoy Hayward had written concerning the annual audit of the Parish Council accounts for the year 2008/09. These accounts will need to be approved by the Parish Council before 30th June, which is a month earlier than last year's audit.

BDO Stoy Hayward also sent a local council briefing. Mr. Filer read two extracts from this document as follows.

‘A risk assessment should be reviewed annually and it should be more than just a review of insurance,. It should cover all matters which could possibly prevent a smaller body from functioning - loss of financial data, change of clerk, damage to play equipment, change of chairman, income for car parks or other sources not being accounted for correctly, salaries being paid incorrectly, VAT being incorrectly accounted for, goods being paid for but not received and many other matters. An example of the risk register can be found on our extranet.

Action: Risk assessment document must be reviewed and the review minuted at a meeting during the year by the 31st March 2009.’

The review of effectiveness of internal audit is more than just a review of the internal audit report. It should cover the following six areas:

- Review of independence
- Review of competence
- Review of relationship with Clerk and Councillors
- Review of audit planning
- Review of audit scope
- Review of audit reporting.

The importance in the review is to understand the role of the internal audit and to ensure that the person undertaking the role is concentrating on the key risk areas relevant to the smaller relevant body. Further information on the review of the effectiveness of internal audit can be found on our extranet.

Action: Review of effectiveness of internal audit document must be reviewed and the review minuted at a meeting during the year by 31st March 2009.’

Mr. Filer reminded the Parish Council that we carry out a monthly check of income and expenditure at each Parish Council meeting. This is part of the internal audit procedure. However, we do not carry-out spot checks, as recommended by BDO Stoy Hayward, of the Clerk's accounting. It was agreed that Mrs. McCash be appointed to do quarterly spot checks and that the first such check should take place before the end of the financial year, 31 March 2009.

The Clerk to obtain a copy of the example risk assessment document on the BDO Stoy Hayward extranet. **Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Filer to draw up a Risk Assessment register for the Parish Council and Community Hall Trustees.

Action: D. Filer

The Clerk said that she had to throw away the memory stick she purchased last year because it was not working properly. It was agreed to purchase a good quality memory stick to back up data.

Action: J. Allsop

Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Poulton reported on the following items.

- **Minutes and report on meeting held on 24th February 2009**

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

Mr. Stock seconded the motion and Mr. Poulton was in favour. Mr. Poulton signed the minutes.

- **Floodlighting**

The current cost for floodlighting was raised to £1 for 10 minutes in April 2007. However, since then there has been a large increase in electricity costs. Mr. Poulton suggested that the floodlighting charge be increased to £1 for 8 minutes. Mr. Knight said he would prefer an increase of £1 for 9 minutes.

Parish Councillors unanimously voted (with a show of hands) an increase of £1 for 8 minutes. It was therefore not necessary to take a vote on an increase of £1 for 9 minutes.

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke to adjust the coin operated machine after 1st April 2009.

Action: N. Poulton/J. Meischke

- **Soap Dispensers**

Mr. Poulton said that the Trustees had agreed to investigate the cost of obtaining new soap dispensers for the five internal toilets. All the toilets were fitted with soap dispensers when the Community Hall was built, however the soap leaked out of the dispensers and their use was ceased. Since then bars of soap have been used, however, even after a short use they look very unhygienic with cracks filled with black debris.

Mr. Meischke has obtained and installed a soap dispenser in the Ladies toilets at the pavilion end of the building which Parish Councillors viewed and approved. The cost of the dispenser is £5 plus VAT and the cost of the soap is £5.50 plus VAT. It was agreed to purchase and fit soap dispensers for the other four internal toilets, the kitchen and the ladies outside toilet.

Action: J. Meischke/N. Poulton

- **Renewal of Gas Contract**

A two-year gas contract has been taken out with NPower commencing on 7th April (Refer to item 8 of the Watton-at-Stone Community Hall Board of Trustees minutes dated 24th February 2009 - Change in gas supplier).

Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **MPPA – Floodlighting refurbishment**

The replacement floodlighting units were installed by Floodlighting Limited on 4th March. Mr. Knight said that he was very impressed by the professionalism of the work. Because less work was required than anticipated, Floodlighting Limited have given us a discount of £360 on their quotation number FL-14817 dated 6th January 2009. This gives us a surplus of £178 on the £5,000 Grassroots grant already paid to us.

Mr. Poulton suggested that notice boards could be purchased for the changing rooms.

Mr. Knight to speak to Helen Doubal (Grants Officer, Hertfordshire Community Foundation) to ask her if we can purchase notice boards with the surplus funds.

Action: I. Knight

Mr. Knight to write to Floodlighting Limited to asking them to confirm in writing that the new floodlighting units are covered by a one year guarantee and give us some idea of the guarantee we can expect on the light bulbs. Also asking them to supply us with information about an on-going maintenance contract that would commence when the guarantee period has expired.

Action: I. Knight

- **MPPA – pressure washing and Moss Kill application**

Mr. Knight said that pressure washing and Moss Kill application on the MPPA is an item in next year's budget. However, he would like approval that the work is done as soon as possible and invoiced in the new financial year (after 1st April 2009). This was agreed. Mr. Knight has obtained quotations from Halcyon Courts and Doe Sport.

- **Football facilities**

There is no progress on this item.

- **Sports and Social Club hire agreement**

Rod Willis, (Sports and Social Club) has signed the annual hire agreement which has been countersigned by Mr. Poulton.

Environment

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Meeting with the Countryside Management Service re the Parish Paths Partnership (P3) grant**

Mrs. Dinnin and Mr. Poulton met with Fiona Underhill and Tom Goldsmith of the Countryside Management Service (CMS). The CMS suggested that Watton-at-Stone use their P3 grant for items other than grass cutting and hedge cutting, but they were persuaded that for this year our grant would cover the same schedule as last year. However, CMS would like Watton-at-Stone to consider different usage of this grant next year.

The stile on the allotments adjacent to the property ‘Kimberley’ needs to be replaced because it does not conform to current regulations. Statistics show that 40% of the public are unable to get over stiles and therefore it is the Parish Council’s responsibility to install a gate. The gate will cost approximately £250 and CMS can arrange for it to be fitted by volunteer workers. Mr. Harris asked if the gate will allow wheelchair access because we should not discriminate against wheelchair users. Mr. Poulton and Mrs. Dinnin to contact Tom Goldsmith because the paperwork supplied enabling the Parish Council to replace the stile with a gate is incomplete. **Action C. Dinnin/N. Poulton**

- **Byelaw sign on the Lammas**

The Byelaw sign has been re-laminated and installed in a new location under the Countryside Management information board on the Lammas.

- **Ditch on the Lammas bank**

A small amount of work needs doing to the ditch and the Lammas bank. Mrs. Dinnin to ask Adam Welch to the work before the end of March (end of the financial year). **Action: C. Dinnin**

- **Removal of dead badger from the Lammas bank**

The Clerk found a dead badger at the top of the Lammas bank. This has now been removed by Fred Burnell.

b) Routine reports

i) Fire-alarm test

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

ii) Monthly village-report

Mr. Dinnin completed this report on the 15th March 2009, the result of which is as follows.

- **Sportsfield:**

Condition of grass	OK.
Litter	OK.
Dog fouling	OK.
General	Good.

- **Children’s Play Area:**

Condition of surface	Good.
Litter/Litterbin	-
Large swings	OK.
Small swings	OK.
See-Saw	OK - Graffiti.
Rainbow multi-play and slide	OK - Graffiti.
Two spring sit-on	OK.
Teen shelter	OK.
General	OK.

- **Bike ramps area:**

Junior Jump	OK – Some graffiti.
Double Ramp	OK.
Fun Box	OK.
General	Broken branch on tree.

- **Community Hall:**

General Condition (Exterior)	OK.
Litterbin	OK.
Car Park	OK.
General	OK.

- **Multi-Purpose Play Area:**

Surface	OK.
Boundary Fencing)	Still loose, otherwise OK.
Tennis nets	OK.
Litter	OK.
General	Good.

- **Great Innings Play Area:**

Equipment	Roundabout needs attention.
Surfaces	OK.
Litter	OK – except near teen shelter.
Dog fouling	OK.
Trees	OK.

Comments	OK.
• Allotments Area:	
Access	OK.
Condition of paths between Allotments	OK.
Condition of Allotments under cultivation	OK.
Condition of Allotments not under cultivation	OK.
Litter	OK.
Comments	Good.
• Culverts on Mill Lane	
Litter and rubbish in and around Culverts	OK.
Dog-fouling	Needs emptying.
Comments	-
• Salt bins	
Perrywood Lane	OK – ¾.
Entrance to Great Innings	Empty.
Great Innings South – outside number 93	Empty.
Station Road	¼ full.
Moorymead Close (2)	Full x 2.
Hazeldell	Empty.
Footpath 17	¾ full.
Beane Road	Empty.
• Dog-waste bins	
Footpath 17	Needs emptying.
Sportsfield	OK.
Church Walk	OK.
Walkern Road	OK.
Station Road (opposite Rectory Lane)	OK.
Station Road (by station)	OK.
High Street (by Memorial)	Needs emptying.
Great Innings	OK.
Mill Lane	OK.
Opposite 5 School Lane	-
• War Memorial	
Comments	Good. Lots of extra litter bags by bin? White plastic container in right hand corner.
• Ornate Village Sign	
Comments	OK.
Post	OK.
General Comments	None.
• Graffiti on play equipment	
The Clerk said that there is also graffiti on the roof of the Teen Shelter (on the Church Walk side).	
Mr. Poulton to inspect the graffiti on all the play equipment and remove if possible. Action: N. Poulton	
• Broken branch on sportsfield	
Mr. Poulton to inspect and take action as necessary. Action: N. Poulton	
• White plastic container	
Mrs. Dinnin to remove and dispose of the white plastic container in right hand corner of the War Memorial garden. Action: C. Dinnin	
iii) Weekly sportsfield-report and action	
Nothing to report	
• Engineering bricks in store cupboard	
There is a small supply of engineering bricks in the external cupboard. Mr. Poulton said he was concerned that these bricks could cause damage to the sportsfield or Community Hall if they should get into the wrong hands when the external cupboard is left open and unattended.	
It was agreed that Mr. Poulton and Mr. Smith remove the bricks. Action: N. Poulton/M. Smith	

9 Correspondence received

a) River Beane Restoration Association – River Beane Environmental improvement

Mr. Poulton read out a letter, dated 13th February 2009, from Dave Stimpson (Chairman, River Beane Restoration Association) outlining the current work that is being done to improve the flow of the River Beane and asking for a donation of £25 towards their running costs.

Mr. Poulton proposed that we make a donation of £25. Mr. Filer seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: J. Allsop

b) East Herts Council – Major Incident Emergency Plan

Mr., Poulton read out the following letter (dated 11th February) from Simon Drinkwater (Director of Neighbourhood Services at East Herts Council.

Many thanks for the plan. The Town Council have obviously carried out a great deal of work to produce the Plan. I very much welcome the Plan and the contribution that Parish Councils can make in an emergency situation.

The response of the total community is vitally important in dealing with the emergency itself and the recovery process afterwards.

The Parish Council might want to think about how it deals with the decision making process during an emergency and the recovery process.

Mr. Poulton and Mrs. McCash have discussed Mr. Drinkwater's comments about dealing with the decision making process and have decided that no further action is required. This was agreed by Parish Councillors.

c) Letter from Terry Welsh

Terry Welsh of 17 Moorymead Close wrote on 20th February regarding his concerns that an extension is being built at 16 Moorymead Close when a planning application has been refused twice on this site.

Mr. Poulton requested that the East Herts Council Enforcement Officer investigate the matter. It appears that the garage, which had planning permission refused twice, is to remain and a small rear extension is being built under the new building regulations (which came into force in October 2008). Mr. Poulton is waiting written confirmation from the Enforcement Officer.

d) Letter from local residents re planning application at 14a Beane Road

Refer to item 6 a iii, planning applications - 14 a Beane Road.

e) East Herts Council – Civic awards nominations

Mrs. McCash said that during the January 2009 Parish Council meeting it was agreed that no Civic Award nominations would be put forward by the Parish Council. However, after the meeting Parish Councillors secretly nominated their Chairman, Mr. Poulton. She then read out the following letter (dated 2nd March) from Councillor Diane Hollebon (Chairman of the Council, East Herts Council) as follows.

'I am writing to thank you for taking the time to make a nomination for the Civic Awards.

We have had an extremely high number of nominations, which shows the large amount of good work done within East Herts but unfortunately on this occasion your nominee has not been chosen.

However, I would like you to pass on my personal thanks to Councillor Nigel Poulton for all the dedication and hard work that he continues to do within the community.'

10 Village organisations

• Watton Youth Drop Inn:

Mr. Poulton reported that the Watton Youth Drop Inn has received a donation of £150 from a Watton-at-Stone resident. The donation has been spent on art equipment, two rubber goal posts and foam footballs.

It is also intended to bring in trainers to teach a range of topics including photography and juditsu.

There are currently over 65 young people on the register with an average of 30 to 35 attending each week.

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

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

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

• Watton-at-Stone Memorial Hall Management Committee: Nothing to report.

• Watton-at-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 items were identified for inclusion in the April 2009 issue of the Parish News.

- **Installation of the replacement floodlighting units**
Mr. Knight to write an article and submit it to the Parish News **Action: I. Knight**
- **Adoption of the Major incident emergency plan**
Mrs. McCash to write an article and submit it to the Parish News **Action: H. McCash**

The Clerk left the meeting.

12 Exclusion of Press and Public - Clerks salary and condition's of employment

The meeting was closed under 'Exclusion of press and public'.

The meeting opened again.

- **The meeting closed at 21.10 hrs.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Thursday 23rd April 2009.**