

A meeting of the Wotton-at-Stone Parish Council was held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 19th July 2000 at 7.15 p.m.

Present: Mr. N. Poulton (Chariman) Mr. D. Stock (Vice-Chairman)
Mrs. C. Dinnin Mr. V. Dunhill
Mr. D. Filer Mr. I. Knight
Mrs. H. McCash Mr. J. Meischke

Member of public Mr. E. Riddle

Before the start of this meeting, PC John Ivens met with Parish Councillors for an informal discussion. The main topics discussed are outlined as follows.

PC John Ivens (who first met with the Parish Council at its meeting on the 15th March 2000) introduced himself as our Rural Community Liaison Officer. He again explained that he is responsible for forming and maintaining links with the community as a whole. Parish Councillors then introduced themselves in turn and discussed problem areas within the village.

Problems highlighted were speeding on Station Road and Walkern Road. Station Road being a particular problem between the 1600 - 1830 hours on weekdays. PC Ivens agreed to have speed-gun sessions in these areas. Concerns about vandalism during the school summer holidays were expressed and a request was made for additional officers in the area. There is also a problem with some customers leaving the Waggon & Horses public house at closing time. Some have left a wake of damage between the pub and their homes. Parish Councillors said that the response time from the Police is very slow and offenders have usually disappeared before the Police arrive.

PC Ivens agreed to come and talk to the Parish Council on a quarterly basis, starting with its meeting to be held on the 15th November 2000 at 7.15 p.m.

PC Ivens left the Community Hall before the start of the meeting proper.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Clark.

2 Talk by P C John Ivens (Hertford Police) on Policing within the village

This item was discussed prior to the meeting.

3 Talk by Sian Freer of the Countryside Management Service

Mr. Stock introduced members of the Parish Council to Sian Freer and invited her to speak on the Countryside Management Service's new Parish Environmental Action Plan.

Sian said that the Countryside Management Service had been working with communities in Hertfordshire for the past 22 years. The work, which has been relatively successful, usually involves a one-off project which is carried-out on an add-hock basis and can be a bit of a hit and miss affair. The idea of the action plan is to draw together all the data within a Parish and have a long-term strategy action plan prioritising the different areas. Sian said that she had asked to attend this meeting to find out if Parish Councillors were interested in an action plan for Wotton-at-Stone. The idea is to set up a steering group which would ideally include environmental groups within the village or persons who have a particular interest. Sian handed out leaflets on the Parish Environmental Action Plans (otherwise known as PEAP), including an example of the implementation of a PEAP for a virtual Parish.

Parish Councillors agreed that they would be interested in a PEAP for Wotton-at-Stone.

It was agreed that a notice be placed in the September issue of the Parish Magazine asking for interested parties to come forward.

Action: D. Stock/ J. Allsop

This item to be placed on the agenda for the Parish Council to be held on the 20th September and a date for the first meeting of the steering group will be arranged.

Agenda: 9/00

Sian Freer left the meeting at 7.45 p.m.

4 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 21st June 2000**

Mrs. McCash proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record. Mr. Knight seconded the motion and all present at that meeting were in favour.

b) Review of actions

- **Sign Doe Sport contract for the resurfacing of the MPPA and return it to them by the 1/08/00 together with the deposit payment**

Mrs. McCash proposed that the contract be signed by the Chairman and returned to Doe Sport informing them that the deposit will be paid on the 1st September 2000. Mrs. Dinnin seconded the motion and all present were in favour. **Action: N. Poulton/J. Allsop**

- **Contact Ron Jack at EH Highways Partnership to arrange a site meeting at Walkern Road bridge**

Mrs. Dinnin reported that she had had a site meeting with Ron Jack, Mr. Poulton and Mr. Knight on 28th June. Mr. Jack had promised to draw-up plans for improving visibility. However, to date no response to their discussions has been received.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to Mr. Jack asking him to respond as soon as possible. **Action: C. Dinnin**

- **Find a contractor to supply and fit a replacement floodlighting lamp at the MPPA**

Mr. Meischke reported that Websters could supply a replacement floodlighting lamp at a cost of £230 plus VAT. They would not charge for labour. Mr. Meischke proposed that a fax be sent to Websters asking them to carry-out the work as soon as possible. Mr. Poulton seconded the motion and all present were in favour. **Action: J. Meischke/J. Allsop**

- **Contact BT re missing panes of glass in High Street telephone box**

This action point has been completed.

The panes of glass have still not been replaced. The Clerk to chase.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Write to Peter Brook (EH Highways Partnership) re condition of the HCC-owned grass verges & copy letter to Brian Hammond (County Councillor)**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 8 c, EH Highways Partnership re Highway matters (on page 9 of these minutes).

- **Write to EH Highways Partnership re traffic-calming for Station Road**

Mrs. McCash said that this item was still outstanding.

Action: H. McCash

- **Ask Kevin Jones to re-install the up-rooted litter bin**

The Clerk said that she had verbally instructed Kevin Jones to re-install the litter bin. Mr. Poulton reported that to-date this work had not been carried-out.

It was agreed to write to Kevin Jones to tell him that he is no longer required to re-instate the bin. A letter to be sent to Jeff Skidmore asking him to carry-out the work.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Inspect two broken roof tiles at Community Hall**

Mr. Poulton reported that Mr. Bunyan will be replacing the tiles in question.

- **Ask Jeff Skidmore to trim the uncultivated allotments**

Mr. Poulton said that he had had a site meeting with Jeff Skidmore on the allotments a few days after the last Parish Council meeting. To date, the strimming work has not been done.

A letter to be sent to Mr. Skidmore asking him to carry-out this work as soon as possible.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Write to EHDC re planning application for Carringtons, Perrywood Lane**

This action point has been completed.

- **Open Spaces Society - one day seminars in August and September 2000**

Mr. Dunhill said that he is unable to attend any of the seminars.

- **EHDC - Local health improvement programme conference - 13th July 2000**

Mr. Clark was not present at the meeting to report on this item.

Action: C. Clark

- **Inform the Conservation Society about TPO for Oak Tree on Great Innings Estate**

This action point has been completed.

- **Return completed EHDC best value questionnaire re capital grants for leisure projects**

This action point has been completed.

- **Contact Three Valleys Water re outstanding trench-work problems in the village**

Mr. Filer said that he had written to Mr. David Alexander, the new Managing Director of Three Valleys Water, regarding the trench-work problem and copied him with three reports from Parish Councillors (i.e. reports from Mr. Filer, Mr. Stock and Mr. Dunhill). Mr. Filer then read out Mr. Alexander's reply (dated 12th July).

'Thank you for your letter dated 30 June 2000 regarding the reinstatement needed in Watton-at-Stone and the reports from the Parish Councillors. Can I firstly say that I was very sorry to learn of the problems you have experienced to date and that it has been necessary for you to have to write to me personally.

Firstly I have passed copies of these reports onto the relevant project managers, who were and are responsible for the work carried out in Watton-at-Stone, and were satisfied that the reinstatement was to the correct standards. Secondly I can confirm that our Reinstatement Team will shortly visit the village and inspect the areas that you believe are still faulty, following this any necessary work will soon be actioned.

Please be assured that we take the reporting and subsequent repair of deficiencies resulting from work we have carried out very seriously and we are extremely grateful when members of the public take time and effort to advise us. We always aim to carry out the reinstatements as quickly as possible, but unfortunately there are some very busy periods when we can not complete such work as expeditiously as we would like.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention and the opportunity to progress a satisfactory resolution. Please contact Vicki Bullock, the local Regional Office Technician if you require any further assistance. I have enclosed a leaflet on our complaint procedure, which you may find useful should you need to contact us on any further issues.'

Mr. Filer expressed his desire to meet with Three Valleys Water Reinstatement Team when they visit the village.

Action: D. Filer

- **Write to Mr. Abel Smith re woodwork on Village Pump**

Mr. Filer said that his action point had been to confirm his conversation with Mr. Abel Smith re the treatment of the woodwork.

However, within a week of the last Parish Council meeting, the work had been completed. Mr. Filer had therefore written to Mr. Abel Smith expressing the Parish Council's thanks for completing the treatment of the woodwork surrounding the Village Pump.

- **Write letter of support re plans to renovation the kitchen at the Watton-at-Stone Memorial Hall**

This action point has been completed.

- **Arrange for information board at Watton Green to be erected as soon as possible**

Due to holidays, Mr. Stock and Mr. Filer had been unable to complete this action point.

Mr. Stock and Mr. Filer to liaise regarding this matter and arrange to have the framework erected during the summer months.

Action: D. Stock/D. Filer

- **Invite members of the Hertfordshire University to commemorative church service on 31st December 2000**

Mr. Filer said that an invitation should be sent to the Secretary and Registrar of the University of Hertfordshire, who will then arrange for appropriate representatives of the University to attend the service. Mr. Filer said that the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Neil Buxton, may wish to attend.

It was agreed that an invitation be sent by Mr. Poulton on his return from holiday at the end of August.

Action: N. Poulton

Mr. Filer to give the name and address of the Secretary and Registrar of the University of Hertfordshire to the Clerk.

Action: D. Filer

- **Have two additional keys to the external meter cupboard cut**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 8 e, Business Gas - re key to the external cupboard at the Community Hall (on page 9 of these minutes).

- **Return completed EHDC best value questionnaire re services (namely: street cleaning and grounds maintenance)**

This action point has been completed.

5 Specific items

a) Parish Map

Mr. Meischke said that his son, Jonathan Meischke, had up-dated the Parish map to include the latest input from the Parish Council. He also reported that Don Chandler had given him some of his paintings of buildings that could be included in the Parish Map. Jonathan Meischke is going to scan these pictures onto the Parish Map to see if they could be used instead of the existing photographs. It was agreed that the paintings could be more pleasing to the eye than photographs.

b) Dog-fouling: dog-waste bin for Mill Lane

Mr. Poulton said that he had again written to Wimpey Homes re their verbal agreement to purchase three dog-waste bins for the village. He has not received a reply.

Mr. Poulton will continue to pursue this matter.

c) Three Valley water trenches

This item was discussed under item 4 b, Review of Actions - Contact Three Valleys Water re outstanding trench-work problems in the village (on page 3 of these minutes).

d) Walkern Road bridge

This item was discussed under 4 b, Review of Actions - Contact Ron Jack at EH Highways Partnership to arrange a site meeting at Walkern Road bridge (on page 2 of these minutes).

e) Future of the recycling site at Watton JMI School

Mr. Poulton reported that EHDC had agreed to fund the re-design of the recycling point. Mrs. McCash said that to date the School Governors had not discussed this matter. A meeting of the School Governors is to be held on the 20th July, when hopefully it will receive their approval.

f) Fir trees behind play area on Great Innings Estate

Mr. Poulton read out a letter from EHDC (dated 18th July) stating their intention to remove three conifer trees from directly behind the slide mound at the back of the Great Innings play area. They feel that the trees have grown too large and are not suited to the play area. The Police have also raised concerns about people hiding amongst the trees, and have evidence that the area has been used for drug abuse.

The Parish Council to write to EHDC stating that they have no objections to the removal of the trees.

Action: J. Allsop

g) Up-date report on Sports & Social Club

Mr. Knight reported that the Sports & Social Club held its AGM on Monday 10th July in the Community Hall. At that meeting John Booker (Chairman) and Jackie Carter (Secretary) resigned. Although a new Chairman and Secretary were not elected the general feeling of those present was that the Sports & Social Club should not be disbanded. Mr. Knight, Phil Gurney and Maurice Gordon have formed a small committee to develop, over the next three months, a strategy to try enable the Sports & Social Club to continue. This will include attracting people who are not involved themselves with sporting activities to carry-out administration duties. Also to involve junior sports more, for example there is no junior cricket team in Watton-at-Stone (but Watton youth do play in Datchworth's Junior Team).

Mr. Poulton proposed that the following letter be John Booker.

'The Parish Council has learnt that you have resigned as Chairman of the Sports & Social Club.

The Parish Council would like to say "a big thank you" to you for chairing this organisation over the last thirty years.

We appreciate the hard work you have done to improve and promote sport in the village. Without your guidance there would not be so many thriving clubs in the village.

We all wish you every success in the future.'

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

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Sight Screens**

Mr. Knight said that the Sports & Social Club was not happy with the wording of the letter sent out by the Parish Council stating that they would like it recorded that they are not responsible in any way for the sight screens and that all maintenance and insurance cover (including liabilities) is the responsibility of the Watton-at-Stone Sports & Social Club and asking for a copy of the letter to be signed and dated as confirmation of receipt.

Mr. Knight agreed to draft a more appropriately worded letter.

Action: I. Knight

6 Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

Mrs. McCash reported on the following items concerning the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee.

- **Report on meeting with the Auditors (Pannell Kerr & Forster) re the accounts for the Parish Council**

Mrs. McCash said that the Clerk had met with the auditors, who were happy with the figures presented to them for the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2000. However, to make their job easier in future years, they have asked for various amendments to be made to the layout of the financial papers.

- **Approval of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31st March 2000**

Because of problems with the Parish Council's printer, the Clerk has been unable to carry-out the amendments requested by the auditors. The approval of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31st March 2000 will therefore be deferred to the Parish Council meeting to be held on the 20th September 2000.

- **Approval of the Community Hall accounts for the year ended 31st March 2000**

McCash and Hay have completed their audit of the Watton-at-Stone Community Hall accounts for the year ended 31st March 2000. All Parish Councillors present were copied with the accounts.

Mr. Knight proposed that Mr. Poulton sign the audited accounts for the Watton-at-Stone Community Hall. Mr. Meischke seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

A copy of the signed accounts to be sent to McCash and Hay.

Action: J. Allsop

- **3-monthly statement of accounts**

All Parish Councillors have been copied with the 3-monthly statement of accounts for the period ending the 30th June 2000.

Mrs. McCash said that the 3-monthly statement shows that Parish Council and Community Hall spending is in-line with the budgeted figures.

Mrs. McCash thanked the Clerk for all the work she had done to enable both audits to be carried-out so smoothly and for helping her to ease into the job of Chairman of the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee.

- **Office equipment - printer**

Mr. Dunhill reported that the Parish Council's Hewlett Packard Laser Jet 5L printer is broken. He has had it checked by County Supplies engineers, who estimate that the repair would cost £100. Mr. Dunhill said that the cost of a similar type of Hewlett Packard laser printer is approximately £220, but for an additional £50 a version which includes a scanner and copier facility could be purchased. It was agreed that we should pay the extra for the scanning and copying facility.

Mr. Dunhill said that the Clerk had brought the Parish Council's computer to his home because she was having difficulties in getting the old Epson LQ-100 printer to work. The Clerk has often complained that the computer crashed when more than one programme is open at a time. Mr. Dunhill said that whilst working on the computer he had removed over a 100 temporary files. These will have occurred each time that the computer crashed. Mr. Dunhill proposed that the Parish Council purchases a new computer, with up-dated software, and the printer, up to a total cost of £1,000. Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Mr. Dunhill to arrange for the purchase of a new computer and printer. If the cost exceeds £1,000, Mr. Dunhill to seek the permission of four or more Parish Councillors for additional funding.

Action: V. Dunhill

Community Hall Trustees

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

- **MPPA - re-surfacing project**

This item was discussed under 4 b, Review of Actions - Sign Doe Sport contract for the resurfacing of the MPPA and return it to them by the 1/08/00 together with the deposit payment (on page 2 of these minutes)

- **Revised quotation from Bob Adams for external re-decoration of Community Hall**

Mr. Adams has supplied his revised quotation (dated 24th June 2000) of £1030. The price for the decoration of the exterior woodwork of the Community Hall remains at £945, with an additional £85 to replace the rubber seals around the windows as required.

A letter agreeing to the revised quotation to be sent to Mr. Adams.

Action: J. Allsop

Comment [C1]:

- **Annual inspection of fire equipment**

Mr. Poulton said that he had been present while Fire Protection Services Limited carried-out its annual inspection of the fire equipment. Unfortunately the handle on the kitchen fire extinguisher had been damaged and its repair cost £88.13. The cost of the annual inspection was £94.25.

Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Meischke reported on the following items concerning the Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee.

- **MPPA - floodlighting lamp**

This item was discussed under item 4 b, Find a contractor to supply and fit a replacement floodlighting lamp at the MPPA (on page 2 of these minutes).

- **Main Hall flooring at Community Hall**

Mr. Ellis (of J & M Contract Flooring Specialists Ltd, Hertford) has still not carried-out the work (free of charge).

Mr. Meischke said that he uses the same type of contact adhesive used to stick down the Main Hall flooring at his garage. He proposed that to avoid further delay and possible damage to the flooring, he could attempt to stick down the flooring himself. Mr. Poulton seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: J. Meischke

Mr. Meischke reported that the windows in the changing rooms were left open one Tuesday evening, following use by the Football Club. This is not the only occasion that the windows have been left open. The windows open sufficiently that an agile person could gain access to the building. Mr. Knight agreed to speak to the different sporting groups within the Sports & Social Club asking them to make sure that windows are doors are locked after use.

Action: I. Knight

- **Storage building on sportsfield**

Mr. Meischke reported that in the Parish Council's lease agreement with the St. Albans Diocesan Board for the land that the MPPA stands on, it states that there shall be no building erected on the site. If the Cricket Club wished to build on this site, they would have to obtain permission from the St. Albans Diocesan Board. He then read out a letter from Mr. Cled Fursland (Treasurer, Watton-at-Stone Cricket Club) dated 13th July.

Mr. Fursland has applied to EHDC for a grant towards the building of a storage hut, with a veranda, adjacent to the MPPA on the sportsfield. EHDC has pointed out that a grant is unlikely to be agreed because the leasehold of the area of the sportsfield is between the Parish Council and the St. Albans Diocesan Board and the Cricket Club has no written agreement between themselves and the Parish Council. However she has suggested that if the Parish Council provided a written undertaking to the Cricket Club that they can maintain use of that area for the remainder of the existing lease with the St. Albans Diocesan Board, and for any future lease, she feels that, on that account at least, the grant would be forthcoming.

Mr. Fursland also wants to know the exact position of the electricity cables to the floodlights.

It was agreed that a letter, headed to whom it may concern, be sent to the Cricket Club stating that the Cricket Club (as a constituent Club of the Watton-at-Stone Sports and Social Club) hire the Playing Field (which includes the area leased from the St. Albans Diocesan Board) from the Parish Council on a regular annual basis and that it is planned that this arrangement will continue in the future, and will certainly extend during the period of the lease of the land from the St. Albans Diocesan Board and any future lease.

Mr. Fursland to be informed in a separate letter that the Parish Council does not know the exact location of the electricity cables.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

Environment

Mr. Stock reported on the following items concerning the Environment Sub-Committee.

- **Watton Green**

Mr. Stock said that Mr. Stanley is carrying-out the grass cut at Watton Green and the Lammas over the next few days. The removal of the grass cuttings will be carried-out over the weekend. Mr. Filer said that half of Watton Green had been cut today.

Sian Freer (of the Countryside Management Service) has confirmed that she will provide us with some text about the wildlife and wildflowers etc. on Watton Green for inclusion on our information board.

- **Village Pump**

This item was discussed under item 4 b, Review of Actions - Write to Mr. Abel Smith re woodwork on Village Pump (on page 3 of these minutes).

This project has now been completed and therefore this item can be removed from the agenda.

• **Traffic-calming and safety of crossing in Station Road**

Mrs. McCash said that there was no further progress to report.

i) **Report**

Mr. Poulton carried-out the sportsfield report on the 19th July, the result of which is as follows.

• **Sportsfield:**

Condition of grass	Good.
Litter	None - litter bin by far corner still not installed.
Dog-waste bin and fouling	None.
Netball posts	OK.
General	Metal fence tided to Oak tree - needs to be removed. Swing in other Oak tree. Notice board has been removed.

• **Children's Playground:**

Condition of surface	-
Litter/Litter bin	Empty.
Large swings	OK.
Small swings	OK.
See-Saw	OK.
Slide	OK.
Comments	Weeds around play area. Jeff Skidmore instructed to spray.

• **Community Hall:**

General Condition	Good - hole in roof above store cupboard. Mr. Bunyan informed to mend.
Litter bin	Empty.
Car Park	Clean - needs spraying around edge. Jeff Skidmore instructed to carry out works.
General	Weeds around Hall - Jeff Skidmore instructed to spray.

• **Multi-Purpose Play Area:**

Surface	Good.
Boundary Fencing	Good.
Tennis nets	Both nets up.
Litter	None.
General	Weeds around perimeter but suggest we wait for refurbishment of MPPA.

• **Great Innings Play Area:**

Equipment	Good - one fenced off for building.
Surfaces	Good.
Litter	None.
Dog-waste bin and fouling	None.
Comments	-

• **Allotments Area:**

Access	Good.
Condition of paths between allotments	OK.
Condition of Allotments cultivation	OK.
Condition of Allotments not under cultivation	OK.
Litter	None.
Comments	Grass still needs cutting on unused allotments.

• **Culverts on Mill Lane**

Litter and rubbish in and culverts	None.
Dog-fouling	None.
Comments	Rubbish bin full.

• **Salt bins**

Perrywood Lane	OK.
Great Innings	OK.
Station Road	OK.
Moorymead Close	OK.
Hazeldell	OK.

- **Dog-waste bins**

Footpath 17	OK.
Sportsfield	OK.
Church Walk	OK.
Walkern Road	OK.
Station Road	OK.
High Street (by Memorial)	OK.

A letter to be sent to Jeff Skidmore reminding him to spray the weeds around the Community Hall, car park and play area with weed-killer.

Action: J. Allsop

7 Planning

a) Applications

i) Carringtons, Perrywood Lane

Demolition of existing triple garage

Parish Councillors studied the plans for this application

After discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council do not object to the application. However, they remain concerned about, and object to, the application for the construction of a replacement triple garage with games room above, as the plans show that it has a potential for a dwelling.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

ii) 20 Lammas Road

Staircase to and loft conversion

Parish Councillors studied the plans for this application

Mr. Knight reported that he had spoken with one of the neighbours, who had no objections.

After discussion, no objections were raised.

The Clerk to inform EHDC that the Parish Council has no comment on this application. **Action: J. Allsop**

b) Decisions

i) Wotton-at-Stone Playgroup, School Lane

Outline planning permission for residential development
-EHDC granted

ii) Land off School Lane -Amended scheme

Erection of 2 detached dwelling houses & 1 bungalow, incorporating access, parking, landscaping etc.
-EHDC granted

iii) Crowbury, Church Lane

New building for 4-car garage & leisure facilities
-EHDC granted

iv) Crowbury, Church Lane

Single storey infill to courtyard. Single storey extension of provide new rear access.
Some elevation alterations. Convert of coach house to gymnasium
-EHDC granted

v) Corner of High Street and Great Innings

Twelve terraced houses with access and car parking facilities
-EHDC granted

vi) Church Meadow and Churchyard, Church Lane

Extension to churchyard
-EHDC granted

8 Correspondence received

a) Mr. Richard Singleton - letter of resignation

Mr. Poulton read Mr. Singleton's letter of resignation from the Parish Council (dated 2nd July), and his own personal reply.

It was agreed that the Parish Council write to Mr. Singleton regretfully accepting his resignation and thanking him for the work he carried-out as a Parish Councillor.

Action: J. Allsop

b) EHDC - re casual vacancy

The Clerk has written to EHDC informing the returning officer of the resignation of Mr. R. Singleton as a Parish Councillor and the resultant vacancy. EHDC has sent official notices (which have been placed on the notice boards in the village) stating that a vacancy now exists. An election to fill the vacancy will be held if requested in writing by ten local government electors (from the electoral area) no later than 3rd August.

If no election is requested, then the vacancy can be filled by the Parish Council as soon as practicable after 3rd August.

It was agreed that if EHDC write to advise the Parish Council to fill the vacancy, then appropriate notices will be placed on the Parish Council notice boards asking for written applications before Friday 8th September, so that a new member can be co-opted onto the Parish Council during its meeting on the 20th September.

Action: J. Allsop

c) EH Highways Partnership re Highway matters

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter (dated 28th June) from Ron Jack (Parish Engineer, EH Highways Partnership).

'Thank you for your letter to Peter Brook, as the Parish Engineer the letter has been forwarded to me to comment on.

Grass cutting. I have spoken to your Chairman on this matter and I wholeheartedly agree with your comments. The matter of poor grass cutting has been raised with our Contractors (Highground) and the Highway Authority is expecting a marked improvement in performance.

Trees. Again I have been speaking to your Chairman who raised the matter with me at a site meeting. At the moment we are in discussion with the Consultant from the County Council to find out the costs.

As to your comment 'without delay' I am afraid that the County Council have an agreed system with its contractor and unless the problem is an emergency we have to work within the agreed contract procedure. Officers have also got to consider the financial position as well as a priority system.'

It was agreed that there had not been a marked improvement in the condition of the HCC grass verges. It was also noted that no work had been carried-out on the trees in Station Road and the dead Laburnum tree on Hazeldell has still not been removed. Mrs. McCash reported that the Laburnum tree currently has a rope swing attached to it and she has seen it in use.

It was agreed to write to Ron Jack stating that there had been no marked improvement in the grass verges and requesting to know how many grass cuts are carried-out each year and what is the "agreed system with its contractor". Also, when will the trees in Station Road be cut back and the dead Laburnum tree (and rope swing) removed on Hazeldell.

Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop

It was also agreed that the Parish Council need to monitor the situation.

d) EHDC - Leisure Guide 9/00 - 12/00

EHDC has asked for details of any events being held in the village between September and December 2000, so that they can be included in their leisure guide. Mr. Knight agreed to contact the different sporting clubs to see if they have any items to be included.

e) Business Gas - re key to the external cupboard at the Community Hall

Mr. Poulton said that he had contacted Business Gas to arrange a date to read the gas meter and give them a key to the external cupboard at the Community Hall. The meter reader did not arrive at the agreed time and therefore Mr. Poulton had left the key in the cupboard and set the door up. Subsequently, the meter reader called and read the meter but did not collect the key. The key was then stolen from the cupboard. Business Gas has not agreed liability for the loss of the key, but as a good will gesture have deducted £40 from their latest bill, so that a replacement lock can be purchased. It was agreed not to replace the lock unless it proves to be a problem in the future.

f) HCC - Public sector pledge

HCC has written (letter dated 6th July) to us re the Hertfordshire Public Sector Environmental pledge. Mr. Poulton reminded Parish Councillors that the Wotton-at-Stone Parish Council became a signatory of the pledge at the end of last year and have now been asked to complete a background survey form.

Mr. Poulton read out questions from the questionnaire and Parish Councillors agreed on the appropriate answers. The completed form to be returned to HCC.

Action: J. Allsop

g) EHDC - Development control service survey 2000

EHDC is carrying out a survey to ensure that they are providing the best possible service to their customers. They have given the Parish Council 10 questions relating to topics such as the Local Plan, publicity of planning applications, planning enforcement and delegation of decisions. They have asked for these to be distributed to people in the area who are interested in their environment.

h) HCC - Temporary closing of footpath 17

HCC has written to advise us that footpath 17 will be closed from 31st July, for up to 2 weeks, to allow resurfacing to take place. Mr. Poulton said that it is unlikely that the footpath will be closed for more than a day or two.

Mr. Dunhill reminded Parish Councillors that the bollard on footpaths 17 situated on the sportsfield-hedge-side of School Lane is scheduled to be moved closer to the other bollard, at the same time as the resurfacing works.

i) Cornhill Insurance re lamppost number 5

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter (dated 8th July) regarding lamppost number 5.

‘We have received correspondence from Ecovert stating that whilst they serviced the area on 8/03/00, 9/03/00 and then later in the month, they were not working there on 15/03/00, the date of this incident. They accept no responsibility.

We await the estimate to progress the claim, however we regret we will be unable to make a recovery.’

The Parish Council now awaits an invoice from EH Highways Partnership for the repair work carried-out so that they can submit it to Cornhill Insurance.

9 Reports from other Organisations

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

Mrs. McCash reported that the next meeting of the School Governors will be held on Thursday 20th July 2000.

• **Watton-at-Stone Youth Club**

Mrs. Dinnin reported that two people had been interviewed for the job of Youth Leader. One of them has now been offered the position (acceptance is awaited).

Mrs. Dinnin said that a Chairman of the new management committee had not yet been elected, however Mrs. McCash has agreed to act as Treasurer.

• **Sports & Social Club**

Items concerning the Sports & Social Club were discussed under item 5 g, Up-date report on Sports & Social Club (on page 4 of these minutes).

10Accounts/Correspondence

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash

Payments

None

Receipts

Allotment rent

7.00

7.00

Cheques required

K. Lloyd 150 ‘Peep into the Past’ videos 176.25

D. R. Monk War memorial maintenance - 6 month period 62.50

D R Monk Weeding in the High Street 95.00

Sedexho Ltd Grass cut 2000 - half payment 343.10

J. Allsop July salary 449.70

Phone 21.48

2 Fax ink cartridges 24.50 495.68

Inland Revenue Tax & NIC for the Clerk 115.14

1287.67

Cheques received

EHDC LEAF Grant for financial year 1999/2000 99.64

99.64

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash

Payments

Protector alarms - 4 keys	11.17
Business gas - to 28.06.00	<u>61.73</u>
	<u>72.90</u>

Receipts

Jim Keen - Main Hall hire	20.00
Mrs. Beatty - Pavilion hire	14.00
Kate Harris - Pavilion hire	<u>21.00</u>
	<u>55.00</u>

Cheques required

H M Customs & Excise	VAT return for 5/00 to 23.06.00	178.21
Three Valleys Water		85.04
Fire Protection Services	Refill fire extinguisher	88.13
EHDC	July rates	83.00
C. Bewley	32 hours cleaning work	160.00
McCash & Hay	Annual audit	79.90
Fire Protection Services	Annual fire equipment check	94.25
HCC	Cleaning materials	37.07
C. Bewley	32 hours cleaning work	<u>160.00</u>
		<u>965.60</u>

Cheques received

Cornhill Insurance	Claim for window, broken lock & hand-dryer	332.23
Mrs. Gilbey	Main Hall hire	75.00
EHDC	Deposit for summer play scheme	100.00
Badminton Club	Hire of Main Hall for July & September	<u>99.00</u>
		<u>606.23</u>

Mrs. McCash proposed that the accounts be paid, Mrs. Dinnin seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

11 Chairman's / Clerk's Report

Mr. Poulton reported on the following items.

• **88 Hazeldell**

The Clerk noted from the records that the planning conditions concerning a raised fence expired on the 31st January 1999. She contacted EHDC who are now investigating the matter and will inform the Parish Council of the outcome in due course.

• **Naming of the new development on the former Watton garage site in the High Street**

EHDC have written to inform us that it is their intention to name the development 'Charter Place' (numbers 1-12).

Parish Councillors discussed this matter and agreed that 'Charter Place' was too urbanised for a rural village such as Watton-at-Stone. After much discussion about various alternatives, Mr. Stock proposed that it be called 'LONG MEADOW' which is the name of a nearby field. Mr. Poulton seconded them motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

• **Village Web Site**

A leaflet on Village Web Sites has been sent to the Parish Council. Mr. Poulton asked Mr. Dunhill to see if this was of any interest to us.

Action: V. Dunhill

• **The meeting closed at 9.15 p.m.**

• **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 20th September 2000.**