

A meeting of the Wotton-at-Stone Parish Council was held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 18th October 2000 at 7.15 p.m.

Present:	Mr. N. Poulton (Chariman)	Mr. D. Stock (Vice-Chairman)
	Mrs. S. Davies	Mrs. C. Dinnin
	Mr. V. Dunhill	Mr. I. Knight (after 7.48 pm)
	Mrs. H. McCash	Mr. J. Meischke

1 Apologies for absence

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

2 Signing of declaration of Office of new Parish Councillor

Mrs. Davies signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office, which was then signed by the Clerk.

3 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 20th September**

The following amendments were made to the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 19th July 2000.

- Page 1, Item 2 b, Review of Actions, first item - Place notice in Parish Magazine re PEAP Environmental steering Group

'Notices have been pout' should read 'Notices have been put'.

- Page 7, Item 4 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Traffic-calming in Station Road

The first line of the first paragraph

'It was agreed that a letter be sent to Mr. Jack asking him to what'

Delete the word 'to' between 'him' and 'what'

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

b) Review of actions

- **Inspect Three Valleys Water trench work**

This item to be discussed under 4 c, Specific Items - Three Valley Water trenches (on page 4 of these minutes).

- **Chase Cricket Club re sight-screen letter**

Because Mr. Knight had not arrived at the meeting, this item was deferred until his arrival.

This item was discussed after item 4 n - Litterpick (on page 6 of these minutes).

- **Write to Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership) re HCC-owned grass verges**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 7 g, EH Highways Partnership – Highway Matters (on pages 12 and 13 of these minutes).

- **Write to both candidates who applied to be a Parish Councillor**

This action point has been completed.

- **Visit all Parish Councillors with the updated versions of the Parish Map**

This item to be discussed under 4 a, Specific Items – Parish Map (on page 3 of these minutes).

- **Contact Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership) re Walkern Road bridge**

Mrs. Dinnin said that due to holiday commitments she had asked Mr. Knight to carry out this action point.

Because Mr. Knight had not arrived at the meeting, this item was deferred until his arrival.

This item was discussed after item 4 n - Litterpick (on page 6 of these minutes).

- **Obtain quotations for the cutting back of the branches along the Lammas riverbank**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 4 g, Strim branches along Lammas riverbank (on page 4 of these minutes).

- **Write to HCC re the relocation of the bollard on School Lane**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 4 h, Reinstatement of bollards in School Lane, (on page 4 of these minutes).

- **Send signed copy of accounts for the year 1999/2000 to Pannell, Kerr & Forster**

This action point has been completed.

- **Arrange date for Budget & Finance Sub-Committee meeting**

This action point has been completed.

- **Arrange for the removal of bench seat on sportsfield**

Mr. Poulton reported that the seat had not yet been dismantled because of the wet condition of the sportsfield caused by the recent excessive rainfall.

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke will remove the seat as soon as the sportsfield is dry enough to allow vehicles to go onto it.

Action: N. Poulton/J. Meischke

- **Write to Chief Constable re policing problems at Community Hall during summer holidays**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 7 l, Hertfordshire Constabulary, (on page 13 of these minutes).

- **Accept quotation for redecoration work at Community Hall**

This action point has been completed.

- **Ask Don Chandler to fill flood-gutter outside Community Hall with sand**

This action point has been completed.

- **Replace flood-guttering**

Mr. Poulton reported that he had replaced the guttering, which has been glued and screwed it in place.

- **Chase Sian Freer for her contribution to the text for the Watton Green information board**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 5 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Watton Green (on page 9 of these minutes).

- **See what plants need replacing around Village pump and arrange for them to be purchased and planted**

Mr. Poulton reported that he had ordered the plants required from Major Shepherd (Watton Nursery). These should be ready for collection next week and Mr. Poulton will arrange for them to be planted.

Action: N. Poulton

- **Chase Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership) re installation of footpath on the Station Road bridge**

This item to be discussed under 5 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Footpath over Railway Bridge at Station Road (on page 9 of these minutes).

- **Write to Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership) re traffic-calming for Station Road**

This item to be discussed under 5 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Traffic-claming in Station Road (on pages 9 and 10 of these minutes).

- **Make a budget provision for replacing the 4 seats on the large-bay swings at the sportsfield**

This item is covered under 5 a, Budget & Finance Sub-Committee - Report on meeting held on the 16th October 2000 (on page 6 of these minutes).

- **Inspect large tank on the allotments to see if it is safe**

This item to be discussed under 5 a, Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee – Water tanks on allotments (on page 9 of these minutes).

- **Write to EHDC re planning application for Amon Luin, Walkern Road**

This action point has been completed.

- **Invoice the Football Club for permanent line marking on the sportsfield**

The line marking has now been carried-out. However, the Parish Council cannot invoice the Football Club until they have been invoiced for the work.

This item to remain an action point.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Write to EHDC stating that the Parish Council is interested in attending their informal liaison meetings**
 This action point has been completed.
 Mr. Poulton has been given provisional dates for the next liaison meeting.
 Mr. Poulton and Mrs. McCash agreed to attend a meeting on the 12th December at 2.00 pm.
 The Clerk to inform EHDC accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**
 The Clerk to inform Mr. Filer and Mr. Clark of this meeting. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Attend Herts Police Authority - Parish Council community safety meeting on 9th November**
 Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke will be attending the Herts Police Authority meeting and will give their report to the Parish Council at its meeting to be held on the 15th November 2000.
- **Place EHDC Landscape schemes within East Herts letter on high-speed circulation**
 This action point has been completed.
 Refer to item 4 k, EHDC Landscape schemes within East Herts (on page 5 of these minutes).
- **Write to Royal Mail re postal service for Hazeldell**
 This action point has been completed.
 Refer to item 7 p, Royal Mail – re delivery of mail in Hazeldell (on page 14 of these minutes).
- **Request overall results of the Village of the Year competition and how the competition was judged**
 This action point has been completed.
 To date the results have not been received. The Clerk to chase. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Write to Railtrack and EH Highways Partnership re eroded bank on Clappers Lane**
 This action point has been completed.
 Refer to item 5 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Fly-tipping Church Lane (Clappers Lane) (on page 9 of these minutes).
- **Write to young person who apologized for braking window at Community Hall**
 This action point has been completed.
- **Find out name of person to contact at Willowdene re fir trees overhanging Mill Lane**
 Due to holiday commitments, Mrs. Dinnin was only able to complete this action point today. The contact is:
 Stephen Kitchen
 GBS Estates
 Lemsford House
 Lemsford AL8 7TT Tel: 01707 335306
- **Contact person identified re fir trees overhanging Mill Lane**
 This action could not be completed prior to this meeting because Mrs. Dinnin had not been able to obtain the relevant information earlier. **Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop**
- **Cut back Lavatera shrub in High Street**
 This action point has been completed.

4 Specific items

a) Parish Map

This item was deferred to await the arrival of Jono Meischke (Mr. Meischke's son), the designer of the Parish Map.

This item was discussed after item 5 a Budget & Finance Sub-Committee (on page 8 of these minutes).

b) Dog-fouling bins

Mr. Poulton reported that two dog-waste bins had been ordered from Plastic Omnium. They are due to be delivered on the 23rd October 2000.

The following notice was placed in the October issue of the Parish Magazine.

'The Parish Council would like to thank Wimpey Homes for donating two dog-fouling bins for the village.

One will be installed by the new play area at Great Innings and the other at Mill Lane.'

Mr. Poulton said that the Parish Council is not allowed to install dog-waste bins themselves. They must ask EHDC to carry-out the work on their behalf. EHDC has agreed to charge £10 for the installation of each bin.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to Trevor Waldock (EHDC) asking him to arrange for the installation of the two dog-waste bins at the agreed sites. **Action: J. Allsop**

c) Three Valley Water trenches

Mr. Stock said that he had inspected all of the problem areas in Hazeldell that had been included in his recent fault report to Mr. Filer. In some cases, areas that had been ignored have now become more hazardous.

Mr. Stock said that he and Mr. Filer had inspected the other trench-work problem areas in the village.

Mr. Filer has now spoken to Three Valleys Water who have agreed to meet with him to inspect the problem areas outstanding.

Mr. Dunhill reported that the trench work around the reinstated barrier at the top of School Lane is a different level to the rest of the footpath. Water is therefore collecting and users of the footpath (in particular school children) have to walk through puddles of water. Mr. Stock to contact Mr. Filer to ensure that this problem is addressed at the meeting with Three Valleys Water. **Action: D. Stock**

d) Walkern Road bridge

Because Mr. Knight had not arrived at the meeting, this item was deferred until his arrival.

This item was discussed after item 4 n - Litterpick (on page 6 of these minutes).

e) Future of the recycling site at Watton JMI School

Mrs. McCash said that the Board of Governors is due to meet on the 1st November, during which a formal decision about the future of the recycling site will be made.

However, she reported that the Chairperson of the Health & Safety Sub-Committee at Watton-at-Stone Primary School had put it upon herself to verbally tell the District Council that the school did not want to retain the re-cycling site. Mrs. McCash said that she had spoken to most members of the Board of Governors on the subject and the general feeling was that the site should be retained, but relocated to the opposite side of the car park. Mrs. McCash will report on the Board of Governors decision at the Parish Council meeting to be held on the 15th November 2000. **Action: H. McCash**

f) Parish Environmental Action Plan – steering group

The response to the Parish Council's advertisement asking for volunteers to form a steering group had been very disappointing, with only Tony Bradford putting his name forward.

Mr. Poulton has spoken to Sian Freer on the subject and she would still like to pursue the matter further. She has suggested that a veteran-tree project is started up in liaison with her and Tony Bradford. All trees would be listed and detailed on a map.

Many Parish Councillors were sure that Tony Bradford had already done some work on this during his time as a Parish Councillor. It was agreed that the Clerk should investigate this matter. Mr. Poulton said that a tree project could be the right move with regard to getting village interest in a Parish Environmental Action Plan.

The Clerk to look through the Parish Council files to see if a map and listing of trees exists. **Action: J. Allsop**

g) Strim branches along Lammas river bank

Mr. Poulton read out the following quotations.

- **Michael Stanley**

For the trees which run beside the public footpath between Mill Lane and Walkern Road through Lammas field. These are to be cut back with the clearance height of approximately 2 metres above ground level.

£170.00

- **Jeff Skidmore**

To remove all overhanging branches along River Beane

£60.00

Mr. Stock proposed that Jeff. Skidmore's quotation be accepted. Mr. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to notify Jeff Skidmore and Michael Stanley accordingly

Action: J. Allsop

h) Reinstatement of bollards in School Lane

The bollard situated on the sportsfield-hedge-side of School Lane has now been moved closer to the other bollard. Mr. Poulton thanked Mr. Dunhill for his assistance in resolving this matter.

i) Condition of footpath between the two sides of Hazeldell

This footpath has now been re-surfaced. Mrs. McCash said that a good job had been done, however they had damaged a lighting column, which no longer works. Mrs. McCash said that she had contacted the lighting department at EH Highways Partnership who informed her that it was the resurfacing contractor's responsibility to repair the light. Mr. Poulton agreed to investigate this matter with EH Highways Partnership.

Action: N. Poulton

j) Planting of spring bulbs at Southern end of the village

Mr. Poulton reported that Groundwork Hertfordshire had refused our application for spring bulbs for planting at the southern end of the village.

Mr. Meischke said that Major Shepherd (Watton Nursery) would probably agree to donate the required bulbs.

Action: J. Meischke

Mrs. McCash to contact Watton-at-Stone Primary School to see if the senior children would like to help with the bulb planting after the half-term holiday.

Action: H. McCash

k) EHDC Landscape schemes within East Herts

At September's Parish Council meeting it was agreed to place this item on high-speed circulation, with a list attached for Parish Councillors to highlight areas that they feel would benefit from landscaping.

With the exception of Mr. Clark, the item had been seen by all Parish Councillors. No areas had been identified for landscaping.

Mr. Poulton said that, at present, EHDC was not happy to give grants towards planting schemes on roundabouts.

This item to remain on the agenda for further discussion.

l) CDA - Evaluating Rural Housing

This item has been on circulation and Mr. Meischke had made the comment that the Parish Council should consider this item further.

Mr. Poulton outlined the pros and cons for having an evaluation carried-out. There are several plots in the village, of varying sizes, which could be identified for housing. If EHDC agreed the development of any of these plots, then only a possible 5% would go towards affordable housing (as was the case with the Moorymead Close and recent Great Innings estate developments).

Mrs. Davies said that the Wimpey development on the Great Innings estate had had a knock-on effect throughout the village and she had noticed in particular that the house prices in Hazeldell had risen significantly.

This effect would not benefit those in need of affordable housing.

This item was discussed further and it was agreed that the Parish Council would not pursue this matter at the present time.

- **Mr. Knight arrived at the meeting.**

m) List of Parish Councillors

Mr. Poulton said that the list of Parish Councillors needed updating to include Mrs. Davies.

Currently, the Parish Council does not have a representative on the Memorial Hall Committee. Mrs. Davies said that she did not want to take this position because of a possible conflict of interest with the Youth Club (which hires the facilities at the Memorial Hall). Mrs. Dinnin agreed to be our representative until May 2001.

Mrs. Davies requested to be a member of the Environment Sub-Committee.

The Clerk to amend the list of Parish Councillors and distribute it to all Parish Councillors. **Action: J. Allsop**

All Parish Councillors to check the updated list for any errors and notify the Clerk accordingly

Action: Parish Councillors

n) Litterpick

All Parish Councillors were copied with a letter (dated 4th October) from the Parish Council to Kevin Jones concerning the disappointing number of complaints about litter picking in the village, especially the lack of emptying of the litterbins. Mr. Poulton said that he had since spoken with Kevin.

One of Kevin's problems is emptying the litterbins. Dog owners are putting dog faeces (wrapped in plastic bags) in the litterbins. Kevin also has problems of broken bags and having to remove items from the bottom of litterbins. The contents of the litterbins are then transported in EHDC refuse sacks, in his car, to the large waste bin at the Community Hall. Under the Health and Safety laws dog faeces deposited in dog-waste bins have to be removed by special contractors. However, at the present time, it is not against the law for members of public to put dog faeces in litterbins, which are then collected by litter pickers.

It was agreed that the Parish Council obtains some plastic bags to fit in the litterbins to make Kevin's job more pleasant.

Action: J. Allsop

Other improvements, such as the purchase of a small trailer, could also be considered in the future.

Mrs. Dinnin said that the problem of litterbins does not alter the fact that Kevin is not doing his job properly.

Mr. Poulton will be monitoring the situation closely.

Mr. Knight reported on the following items

Item 3 b, Review of Actions (on page 1 of these minutes)

- **Chase Cricket Club re sight-screen letter**

Mr. Knight said that he had chased the Cricket Club re the sight screen(s), but had not received a written response. He said that he intends to write to the Cricket Club in his capacity as a member of the Sports & Social Club stating that if the letter confirming insurance cover for the sight screen(s) is not forthcoming, the Parish Council will ask for the screens to be removed.

Action: I. Knight

- **Contact Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership) re Walkern Road bridge**

Mr. Knight said that he had been unable to contact Ron Jack about the Walkern Road bridge.

Mr. Poulton agreed to speak to Ron Jack about the new signing and the line marking.

Action: N. Poulton

Item 4 d, Specific items (on page 6 of these minutes)

- **Walkern Road bridge**

Refer to the above item (Contact Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership) re Walkern Road bridge).

5 Reports**a) Sub-Committees****Budget & Finance**

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

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

All Parish Councillors had been copied with the 6-monthly statement of accounts for the period ending the 30th September 2000.

Mrs. McCash said that the 6-monthly statement shows that Parish Council spending is in-line with 50% of the budgeted figures. The Budget & Finance Sub-Committee studied the figures in detail at their meeting held on the 16th October 2000 and are happy with the level of spending.

- **Report on meeting held on the 16th October 2000**

All Parish Councillors were given a copy of the minutes of the meeting, together with the Parish Council and Community Hall Trust revised preliminary budget statements for the year 2001/02.

Mrs. McCash went through the recommendations of the meeting.

- **Hire Charges**

Recommendation

- a) The Sports & Social Club hire charges rise from £1730 to £1800 (a rise of 4%).
- b) The Community Hall hire charges to remain the same.

Mr. Meischke said that he would like to discuss hire charges at a meeting of the Community Hall Trustees. He said that if the charges were structured in a different way there was a potential for attracting more hall hirings.

It was agreed that the hire charges be discussed at a meeting of the Community Hall Trustees to be held on Wednesday 1st November at 7.30 pm.

Agenda: Community Hall Trustees

- **Staff remuneration**

The Clerk left the meeting while this item was discussed.

Recommendation

The Clerk's salary to rise from £5676 to £5964.

Christine Bewley's rate of pay to be increased from £5.00 to £5.25 per hour.

Don Chandler's rate of pay to be increased from £4.24 to £5.00 per hour.

All these rises to take effect from 1st April 2001.

Mrs. McCash proposed that the increases in staff remuneration be accepted. Mr. Knight seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk returned to the meeting.

Mrs McCash asked all Parish Councillors to study the preliminary budget statements and give their comments to her before the next Parish Council meeting to be held on the 15th November 2000.

Action: All Parish Councillors

- **Change of Co-operative bank signatories**

Mrs. McCash said that because of the resignation of Mr. Richard Singleton and the subsequent co-option of Mrs. Sarah Davies, the signatures on all the Parish Council accounts need to be updated.

Mrs. McCash proposed that the Parish Council make the following resolution enabling the update of signatures on all the Parish Council and Community Hall Trust accounts with the Co-operative Bank, and to open a new 30-day account for the Community Hall. Mr. Meischke seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

1. The Co-operative Bank plc ("the Bank") shall continue as our bankers;
2. The Bank shall be authorised to honour all cheques and all other documents made or accepted on our behalf even if such payment causes any accounts to be overdrawn or increase any existing overdraft, provided that such documents are signed by any two in accordance with the specimen signatures;
3. The Bank shall act on all specimen signatures in accordance with any instruction, notice, request or other document in writing concerning our account (including the opening of new accounts), affairs or property;
4. The Bank shall be sent a copy of any future resolution which affect the terms of the above resolutions;
5. The Bank shall be sent a copy of any changes in our Rules and Regulations or Bye-laws;
6. The Bank shall be notified in writing of any change in Committee Members;
7. The Bank shall be notified in writing of any change of officials authorised to sign on our behalf;
8. The Bank shall otherwise continue to operate our accounts in accordance with the mandate.

Mr. Poulton to obtain signatures from all current and outgoing Parish Councillors, which the Clerk will return to the Co-operative Bank.

Action: N. Poulton/J. Allsop

- **Annual Audit**

Pannell Kerr & Forster have issued an audit certificate for the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31st March 2000.

The auditors have also sent the following memorandum of matters arising from the audit together with an appendix 3 for signing.

'We recommend that the council consider revising some of the income and expenditure headings next year to allow more appropriate descriptions to be given. For example the income headed General Administration does not provide a clear indication of the nature of the income. It would be more appropriate to describe such income as sundry or miscellaneous if it does not relate to anything specific.'

Mrs. McCash proposed that Mr. Poulton confirms that the matters raised in the audit memorandum have been considered by the Parish Council and will be attended to, by signing appendix 3. Mr. Stock seconded the motion and all present were in favour. Mr. Poulton duly signed.

The Clerk to return the signed appendix 3 to Pannel Kerr Forster.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Poulton said that the audit requires very stringent bookkeeping and thanked the Clerk for keeping the Parish Council books so well. Mr. Stock and Mrs. McCash agreed with this statement.

- **Date of next meeting**

It was agreed that there was no need to set a date for the next meeting Budget & Finance Sub-Committee.

4 a) Parish Map

Jono Meischke (the son of Mr. Meischke) was invited to join the meeting so that the Parish Map could be discussed.

Mr. Poulton said that the time capsule will be buried at 4 pm on 31st December at the Church of St Andrew and St. Mary. An exhibition will take place at the Community Hall on the 30th December, where copies of the Parish Map will be on sale.

The item Time Capsule to be placed on the agenda for the Parish Council meeting to be held on the 15th November.

Agenda: 11.00

It was agreed that the paintings by Don Chandler be included on the Parish Map instead of the photographs. An acknowledgement to Don Chandler to be placed at the bottom of the map.

Various changes to the map were agreed. It was also agreed that the map should be reproduced on A3 paper.

Mr. Meischke and Mr. Poulton to check the amended map so that the final version can be agreed at the Parish Council meeting to be held on the 15th November.

Action: J. Meischke

Copies of the Parish Map will need to be reproduced before the 31st December 2000. Jono Meischke said that a print run of this type usually takes approximately 4 weeks.

Mrs. McCash agreed to obtain a quotation for printing 500 copies of the map in a matt finish (a specification was given to her by Jono Meischke).

Action: H. McCash

Jono Meischke will also obtain a quotation, which he will pass to his father.

Community Hall Trustees

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

- **Fire alarm**

Mr. Poulton said that the fire alarm in the Community Hall had gone off during a hiring. Mr. Meischke and Mr. Poulton spent some time trying to reset the alarm and eventually an electrician was called out. Evidentially, the hirers must have removed the fuse, which has now been replaced. The electrician charged Mr. Poulton £5 for his services.

- **Flood-guttering**

This item was discussed under 3 b, Review of Actions - Replace flood-guttering (on page 2 of these minutes).

Recreation & Amenities

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

- **Storage building on sportsfield**

For the benefit of Mrs. Davies the proposal for the construction of a storage shed on the sportsfield was outlined. Cled Fursland (of the Watton-at-Stone Cricket Club) wrote to the Parish Council in May 2000 asking us to consider proposals for a brick building (to house the motorised roller) to be erected on the sportsfield. The total cost of the scheme would be born by the Cricket Club or the Sports & Social Club. Two schemes were proposed. Option 1, to locate the building adjacent to the MPPA (on the Church Walk side of the sportsfield) and option 2, to locate the building on the School Lane side of the field, i.e. in the far corner furthest away from the Community Hall. After discussion, the Parish Council had agreed to option 1.

At July's Parish Council meeting, Mr. Meischke reported that in the lease agreement with the St. Albans Diocesan Board for the land on which the MPPA stands, it states that there shall be no building erected on the site. Subsequently, Mr. Fursland contacted the St. Albans Diocesan Board in the hope that a building could still be erected on the site.

Comment [C1]:

Mr. Meischke said that Mr. Fursland had now written (letter dated 7th October) to inform the Parish Council that the St. Albans Diocesan Board are unhappy with (a) the suggested position of the storage building and (b) its shape, design and material. He got the very strong impression that even if modified plans were resubmitted, they would not be happy.

Mr. Fursland would now like the Parish Council to consider option 2, i.e. to locate the building on the School Lane side of the field.

Mr. Stock had suggested that the building could be moved onto Parish Council land adjacent to the MPPA. However, this would not be possible due to the position of the football pitch.

Mr. Poulton proposed that the Parish Council accept option 2. Mr. Meischke seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to Cled Fursland stating that the Parish Council has no objections (in principal) to option 2. However, the Parish Council must agree the plans (as drawn up by an architect) before an application for planning permission is submitted. **Action: J. Meischke/J. Allsop**

Mr. Meischke then read out the final paragraph of Mr. Fursland's letter, as follows.

'We would like to store the sight screen for the winter in a less obtrusive place and to that end we suggest adjacent to the MPPA on the side nearest to the church path. We hope that is acceptable to you.'

Mr. Poulton proposed that the Parish Council agrees to the relocation of the sight screen subject to written confirmation that the Cricket Club are fully insured.

Mr. Fursland to be informed of this in our letter to him concerning the building on the sportsfield.

Action: J. Meischke/J. Allsop

Mrs. Davies said that a building in the proposed location could be beneficial because it would fill in a dark corner where youngsters often tend to congregate late at night.

Mr. Poulton reported that the Cricket Club had made a good job of clearing-out the external cupboard at the Community Hall.

- **Seat on sportsfield**

This item was discussed under 3 b, Review of Actions - Arrange for the removal of bench seat on sportsfield (on page 2 of these minutes).

- **Water tanks on allotments**

Mr. Meischke said that he had inspected the allotment area and found more than one water tank. It was agreed to read the allotment lease to see if there is any mention of water tanks.

Action: J. Meischke/J. Allsop

It was agreed to write to all allotment holders regarding water tanks. If the lease states that no water tanks are allowed on the allotments, then the allotment holders to be notified accordingly. If there is no mention of water tanks, then the allotment holders to be informed that they are solely responsible for their water tanks and/or related safety issues.

Action: J. Meischke/J. Allsop

Environment

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

- **Watton Green**

- The ditch has been strimmed.
- The main structure of the information board has been erected.
- Sian Freer (of CMS) has produced her contribution to the text for the information board.

Mr. Stock said that Sian has given him quite a lot of information, which he will sift through so that he can produce something on similar lines to the Parish Map. **Action: D. Stock**

- **Fly-tipping Church Lane (Clappers Lane)**

Railtrack has removed the fly-tipping.

Mr. Stock said that Railtrack and EH Highways Partnership had responded positively to our request for the reinstatement of the bank in the stretch of Church Lane between the two railway bridges. Both parties are to determine who is responsible for the land in question and then act accordingly.

The reinstatement of the bank in Church Lane (otherwise known as Clappers Lane) to remain on the agenda under until the matter is resolved.

- **Village Pump**

This item was placed on the agenda in error.

- **Footpath over railway bridge at Station Road**

Mr. Stock said that the progress of this item seems to have gone in a full circle over the last month.

The current position is that it is unlikely that the footbridge will be installed in during this financial year.

Mr. Stock proposed that a letter be sent to Ron Jack (EH Highways Department) stating that if the work is not carried out in this financial year, then it must be programmed as a priority item for installation early within the first quarter of the financial year 2001/2002. Mr. Poulton seconded the motion and all present were in favour. **Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop**

- **Traffic-calming Station Road**

Mrs. McCash read out a letter she had received from Ron Jack. Mrs. McCash said that Mr. Jack seems unable to separate the installation of a footpath over the Railway Bridge and traffic-calming for Station Road. On each occasion that he has been written to regarding traffic-calming for Station Road he refers to the railway bridge. Mr. Stock said that he had spoken to him on the subject and believes that the two subjects have now been decoupled from each other.

It was agreed that we must get some commitment from EH Highways Department re a traffic-calming scheme. Therefore a letter to be sent to Mr. Jack asking for an outline scheme to be drafted for discussion, so that we can proceed with its implementation as soon as funds become available.

Action: H. McCash

- **Lammas**

Mr. Dunhill reported that he has received the MAFF annual claim form for the Lammas. This needs to be completed and returned before the end of November. **Action: V. Dunhill**

The condition of the grass on the Lammas is very poor with an excessive amount of cleavers, which makes the area not viable for cutting as hay. One possibility for trying to reduce the number of cleavers is to chain harrow at the beginning of the season.

The next phase in the tree-planting scheme needs to be looked at.

Mr. Dunhill will get in contact with Tony Bradford re all the above issues concerning the Lammas.

Action: V. Dunhill

- **PPP**

Mr. Dunhill said that earlier this year he had reported that part of the footpath between Watton House and Mill Lane (close to the quarry edge and adjacent to the by-pass) was in the wrong place.

Originally, he had applied for money to improve this footpath but because volunteer workers are currently carrying out the work, our PPP grant application will be reduced. Way marking will however be carried-out on the new stretch of footpath. The new footpath route is a much safer place.

Mr. Poulton said that he had visited the site and spoken to the volunteers and was very impressed with the work being carried-out.

Mr. Dunhill said that Mr. Cuthbert, Rights of Way Officer, is currently looking to improve the footpath between Perrywood Lane and Bramfield.

- i) **Report**

Mrs. McCash carried-out the sportsfield report on the 14th October, the result of which is as follows.

- **Sportsfield:**

Condition of grass	OK, but some molehills.
Litter	None.
Dog-waste bin and fouling	In use.
Netball posts	OK, no net.
General	Good.

- **Children's Playground:**

Condition of surface	Good.
Litter/Litter bin	Empty/Good.
Large swings	Seats damaged, otherwise good
Small swings	Good.
See-Saw	Good.
Slide	Good.
Comments	-

- **Community Hall:**

General Condition	Good. Graffiti on Parish Council room window.
Litter bin	Empty.
Car Park	In use - Good.
General	Good.
• Multi-Purpose Play Area:	In use.
Surface	Good.
Boundary Fencing	Good.
Tennis nets	Good, winder missing.
Litter	None.
General	Good - opening time sign broken.

• **Great Innings Play Area:**

Equipment	Good.
Surfaces	Some slightly over grown.
Litter	Good.
Dog-waste bin and fouling	Good.
Comments	Trees need undercutting.

• **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	OK.

• **Culverts on Mill Lane**

Litter and rubbish in and culverts	Good.
Dog-fouling	None.
Comments	OK.

• **Salt bins**

Perrywood Lane	1/2 full
Great Innings	1/2 full
Station Road	1/2 full
Moorymead Close	Very low on salt.
Hazeldell	1/2 full.

• **Dog-waste bins**

Footpath 17	In use.
Sportsfield	Used.
Church Walk	Used.
Walkern Road	1/2 full.
Station Road	3/4 full
High Street (by Memorial)	OK.
General Comments:	All litter bins overflowing as they have been all week.

• **Graffiti on Parish Council room window.**

Mr. Poulton said that this had been removed.

• **Broken notice board**

Mr. Meischke will arrange for a replacement notice board to be made.

Action: J. Meischke

• **Fir trees at Great Innings Play area**

Mrs. McCash said that parents had approached her about the remaining fir trees at the rear of the Great Innings play area. Apparently, people are able to hide among the trees and this is frightening young children in the area. Requests have been made that the lower branches of the trees be removed so that anybody standing between the trees would be visible.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to Trevor Waldock at EHDC asking him to cut back the lower branches of the fir trees to a height of 1 metre above ground level.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Litter bins**

Mr. Poulton said that all the village litterbins were emptied over the weekend of the 14th/15th October.

- ii) **MPPA & sports equipment in Main Hall - six-monthly check**

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke will carry-out the six-monthly check on the 1st November, prior to a meeting of the Community Hall Trustees.

6 Planning

a) Applications

None.

b) Decisions

- i) **Carringtons, Perrywood Lane**

Demolition of existing triple garage. Construction of replacement triple garage with games room above.
-EHDC – permission granted.

Mr. Poulton then read out paragraph one of clause 6 of the decision notice.

‘The garage(s) shall be used for the housing of private vehicles and not as additional living accommodation or for any commercial activity.’

7 Correspondence received

a) Groundwork – Free bulbs scheme 2000

This item was discussed under 4 j, Planting of spring bulbs at Southern end of the village (on page 4 of these minutes).

b) CDA – Parish Information seminar – 31.10.00

It was agreed to ask Mr. Filer if he is able to attend the seminar.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Filer to report back as required

Action: J. Allsop

c) EH Highways Partnership – Notification of works for April – June 2001

Mr. Poulton read out EH Highways Partnership’s notification of works (dated 25th September). New ducting work is due to be installed from Harlow to Stevenage between April and June 2001. The route will go through Chapmore End to Stapleford, along the A119 to Watton-at-Stone, either through the village or along the A602 to the Northern boundary.

Mr. Stock said that we must try to avoid any further excavation of the High Street. Otherwise, this type of work could be repeated, with the High Street ending up like a patchwork quilt.

It was agreed to write to Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership) asking him to encourage the contractors to route the ducting via the Watton by-pas (A602), as was done recently.

Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop

d) Cled Fursland – condition of roads in village

Mr. Poulton read out a letter from Mr. Fursland (dated 7th October) concerning the general conditions of the roads and asked what we could do to improve them.

After discussion it was agreed that Mr. Poulton should speak to Mr. Fursland further on this subject.

Action: N. Poulton

This item to be placed on the agenda for the Parish Council meeting to be held on the 15th November, under Specific Items.

Agenda: 11/00

Mrs. Davies said that the stretch of footpath that runs along the High Street (adjacent to the River Beane) opposite the entrance to Motts Close, is badly overgrown.

It was agreed that Mrs. Davies be given the telephone number of Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership) so that she can discuss this matter further.

Action: J. Allsop

e) Cled Fursland – storage building on sportsfield

This item was discussed under item 5 a Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee – Storage building on sportsfield (on pages 8 and 9 of these minutes).

f) The Robeys – Meditation and Remembrance Garden

Mr. Poulton said that, earlier this year, Mr. Robey had asked him to support the Meditation and Remembrance project. However, he thought he was being approached as a District Councillor.

Mr. Poulton then read out a letter from Mr. Ian Robey (dated 6th October). Mr. Robey has approached EHDC and the Environmental Trust for financial support towards this project. However, the application requires them to prove that they have asked the local Parish Council for support.

Mr. Poulton proposed that a letter of support be sent, together with a donation of £50, from the Parish Council's Millennium fund. Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

g) EH Highways Partnership – Highway Matters

Mr. Poulton read a letter from Ron Jack, EH Highways Partnership (dated 5th October).

'Thank you for your letter dated 3rd October.

The standard of grass cutting is laid down in the contract and if the Contractor is not abiding by the contract then sanction can be taken.

The verges are cut once a month between April and September, which is County Council policy.

With reference to my site meeting with Nigel Poulton on Tuesday 5th October 2000, the following points were raised:

1. The footway over the rail bridge in Station Road will be kerbed either side of the bridge deck. Marker post will be placed alongside the kerbs.
2. The 30 mph signs will be upgraded and white edge of carriageway lines will be re-laid.'

It was agreed that the Parish Council should inspect the grass verges on a monthly basis from April to September to make sure that the cutting is taking place and that the work is of a good standard.

This item to be placed on the agenda for the Parish Council meeting to be held in April 2001. **Agenda: 04.01**

h) Railtrack – Fly-tipping in Church Lane

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter from Railtrack (dated 6th October).

'Thank you for your letter dated 5th October.

I have noted your comments on the fly-tipping in Church Lane.

I am making enquiries of our Mapping Office to establish the exact boundary between Railtrack's land and the roadway whereupon I will speak to Mr. Jack to discuss his proposal for reinstatement of the bank'

i) EH Highways Partnership – Highway Matters Church Lane

Mr. Poulton read out part of a letter from Ron Jack, EH Highways Partnership (dated 6th October)

'Thank you for your copy of a letter to Mr. Eaton of Railtrack.

I will investigate the Highway verge at this location and if the verge is Highway I will arrange for works to be carried out.

However, if the verge is the responsibility of Railtrack then you should contact them again for Railtrack to carry out the necessary works.'

j) Women's Royal Voluntary Service

Mr. Poulton said that the Women's Royal Voluntary Service has asked for donations towards its cause.

He then reminded the meeting that, as a general rule, the Parish Council does not donate to charities and it was agreed that this case was no exception.

Parish Councillors could give individual donations to this cause if they so wish.

k) EHDC – Leisure project grant scheme application 2000/01

Mr. Poulton said that EHDC had agreed a grant of £2593 towards the MPPA resurfacing project. The project is due to start in the next week.

l) Hertfordshire Constabulary – 3 letters

Three letters have been received from Hertfordshire Police (dated 5th, 10th and 12th October) concerning our letter to the Chief Constable re the policing problems at the Community Hall during the summer holiday.

The first (from Amanda Green Personal Assistant) acknowledged receipt of our letter. The second (from Peter Maddison, Assistant Chief Constable) said that the Chief Constable had passed the letter to him for a response. He expressed his concern about the contents of the letter and said that he had now copied it to his Divisional Commander, Superintendent Terry Cox, who is responsible for the operational policing in our area.

Mr. Poulton read out the third letter received, which was from Inspector Roy Larter. Inspector Larter said that he had investigated the circumstances of this case and full reports from the officer involved. He agreed

that this matter should have been dealt with more expeditiously and confirmed that the police have visited both children concerned in the breaking of a window at the Community Hall.

Inspector Larter also said that he understood that PC John Ivens would be attending the Parish Council meeting on the 15th November and asked if he might be able to come along too.

Parish Councillors agreed that the Parish Council's concerns over this matter had been to a greater part missed by Hertfordshire Police. It was agreed to send Inspector Larter and invitation to the next Parish Council meeting, where the Parish Council can address their concerns direct to him. **Action: N. Poulton**

m) Oliver Heald MP – re policing

Mr. Poulton read out two letters (dated 12th and 17th October) from Mr. Oliver Heald MP. The first thanked the Parish Council for copying him with its letter to the Chief Constable re the policing problems at the Community Hall during the summer holiday. The second referred to Inspector Larter's letter to the Parish Council dated 12th October (refer to the above item Hertfordshire Constabulary – 3 letters).

n) HCC – Reinstatement of Bollard in School Lane

HCC wrote on the 4th October to inform us that the bollard was due to be relocated in the next few days. As previously reported (under item 4 h, Reinstatement of bollards in School Lane), this work has now been carried-out.

Mr. Poulton said that the letter also stated that Mr. Richard Cuthbert, the Parish Council's previous contact at HCC, had been promoted within the Rights of Way Department and had been replaced by Ian Blomeley (Countryside Access Officer).

o) Mr. Northcott, 11 Watton House

Mr. Poulton read out a letter from Mr. Northcott of 11 Watton House (dated 9th October). Mr. Northcott thanked the Parish Council for attending to the roads and surroundings at the southern entrance of the village and looked forward to seeing the bulbs in spring. He also pointed out that the footpath opposite the War Memorial is overgrown with bushes and brambles.

It was agreed to ask Jeff Skidmore to cut back any shrubbery to clear the footpath. **Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Northcott to be notified of the above action. **Action: J. Allsop**

p) Royal Mail – re delivery of mail in Hazeldell

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter (dated 11th October) from the Royal Mail.

'Thank you for your enquiry of 5th October 2000.

I am currently looking into this matter for your and I will contact you again once my enquiries are complete.

In the meantime, I would like to thank you for bringing this to my attention. If you need to contact me during my enquiries, please telephone 0845 7740740 quoting the reference number above.'

Mrs. McCash said that the problems in Hazeldell continue.

Note: This item to remain on the agenda so that the situation can be monitored.

8 Reports from other Organisations

• **Watton-at-Stone Conservation Society**

Mr. Dunhill said that at the last meeting of the Conservation Society the following items had been discussed.

- The lack of emptying of the litterbins.
- The TPO on the Oak tree at Great Innings

Mr. Stock reported that he had spoken to Liz Greenwood (EHDC) regarding the temporary TPO, which is due to expire at the beginning of December. Ms. Greenwood admitted that she had forgotten to get the TPO confirmed and said that she would arrange for this to be done.

This item to be placed on the agenda for the Parish Council to be held on the 20th December to ensure that action has been taken. **Agenda: 12.00**

• **Watton-at-Stone Primary School**

Mrs. McCash reported on the following items.

- The school is currently undergoing an OFSTED visit. She will give her report on the outcome of the visit during the next Parish Council meeting. **Action: H. McCash**

- Mr. Cantes has produced a list of current pupils at the school. These are to be placed in the time capsule.
- Mr. Cantes would like to use the village pump part of the Watton-at-Stone logo as the school logo. Mr. Stock said that the village pump on its own is not the Watton-at-Stone logo and therefore the Parish Council's permission for its use is not required. However, the school must seek written permission from Phil Berry (the designer of the Watton-at-Stone logo) before they include the pump on any letter headings etc.

Mrs. McCash to write to the School accordingly.

Action: H. McCash

- **Watton-at-Stone Sports & Social Club**

The Sports & Social Club will be holding a meeting on the 8th November.

9 Accounts/Correspondence

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash

Payments

None

Receipts

Allotment rent

14.00

14.00

Cheques required

D. R. Monk	Maintenance of High Street flowerbeds		50.00
D. R. Monk	Maintenance of War Memorial		31.25
Kevin Jones	60 hours litterpick		254.40
J. Allsop	October salary		447.80
Inland Revenue	Tax & NI contributions		115.14
Royal British Legion	Donation towards Poppy Appeal		50.00
M. Stanley	To erect information board at Watton Green	50.00	
	To cut grass on Watton Green	70.00	120.00
Sedexho Land Technology	Sportsfield grass cut 2000 – 2 nd and final payment		343.10
J. Allsop	Phone calls to 03/10/00		<u>32.05</u>
			<u>1443.74</u>

Cheques received

Mr. M. Inman	Allotment rent 2000/01		21.00
Mr. Bunyan	Allotment rent 2000/01		3.50
Mr. Hodges	Allotment rent 2000/01		7.00
Mr. Knight	Allotment rent 2000/01		14.00
Mr. M. Freeman	Allotment rent 2000/01		17.50
Mr. Hale	Allotment rent 2000/01		7.00
Mrs. Ashman	Allotment rent 2000/01		3.50
Mr. Moore	Allotment rent 2000/01		14.00
Mr. Beadle	Allotment rent 2000/01		3.50
Mr. Beadle	Allotment rent 2000/01		7.00
Mr. Green	Allotment rent 2000/01		7.00
Mrs. Barnett	Allotment rent 2000/01		7.00
Mr. Cobb	Allotment rent 2000/01		7.00
Mr. Love	Allotment rent 2000/01		21.00
Mr & Mrs. Philips	Allotment rent 2000/01		24.50
EHDC	Litterpick 2 nd payment		<u>1590.68</u>
			<u>1755.18</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash

Payments

Trevaine Duckworth – Pavilion hire	28.00
Floodlighting to 3/10/00	<u>49.32</u>
	<u>77.32</u>

Receipts

3 valleys water	73.84
Stevenage glass	63.45
EHDC - rates	83.00
* Refer to note below	<u>0.28</u>
	<u>220.57</u>

Cheques required

Mr. D. Chandler	Wages May – September 2000 **		311.64
Business Gas	To 6 th September 2000		<u>286.70</u>
			<u>598.34</u>

Cheques received

Football Club	Main Hall hire		10.00
Alan Headland	Pavilion & shower hire		42.50
Mrs. Gilbey	Main Hall hire		55.00

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

PC-10/00

Mrs Heald	Pavilion hire	28.00
Badminton Club	Main Hall hire	148.50
Football Club	Main Hall hire	30.00
Sports & Social Club	Hire of Community Hall facilities	432.50
		<u>746.50</u>

* Mr. Poulton returned the 12 Roof tiles purchased in September for £20.45 (see September petty cash entry). In their place the following purchases were made.

Drain grating and bolts	£15.73p
Repair of fire alarm	<u>£5.00p</u>
	<u>£20.73p</u>

£20.73p - £20.45p = 0.28p

** All Parish Councillors were copied with Don Chandler's timesheet.

Mr. Knight proposed that the accounts be paid, Mr. Meischke seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

10 Chairman's / Clerk's Report

Mr. Poulton reported on the following items.

- **Vandalism at Watton Station**

Mr. Stock said that he was at the station on Sunday 15th October and discovered the following acts of vandalism.

1. The handset had been torn from the public telephone, leaving bare wires.
2. Covers had been torn from the electric-cable ducts.
3. On the steps, paving slabs had been lifted and smashed, leaving the area in a hazardous state and putting station users at risk.

Mr. Stock reported the damage to Alan Neville (WAGN) who is responsible for the stations on this line and suggested that some urgent action be taken because the problems of vandalism were getting progressively worse. Mr. Neville said that Watton was now one of two problem stations and that he would file a crime report. Also, he would ask the transport police to visit the site

It was agreed that Mr. Stock should contact him again if repairs are not completed within two months.

Agenda 12.00

Mr. Stock said that the station is now in a terrible state and proves that visible acts of vandalism create more vandalism. He was also disappointed to learn that the damaged was caused on Friday 13th October and no one seemed to have reported it.

The Parish Council has also reported the damage to Hertford Police.

- **Picture of Parish Councillors for the Time Capsule**

Mr. Poulton invited Parish Councillors to have a group photograph taken in the Community Hall on 18th November at 10.30 am. The photograph will be placed in the time capsule.

Action: All Parish Councillors

- **The meeting closed at 9.55 pm.**

- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 15th November 2000.**