

A meeting of the Wotton-at-Stone Parish Council was held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 20th September 2000 at 7.15 p.m.

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

Member of public: Mr. E. Riddle

In the absence of Mr. Poulton, Mr. Stock took the chair.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Poulton.

2 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 19th July 2000**

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

- Page 6, Item 6 a, Community Hall Trustees - Annual inspection of fire equipment
Delete 'its repair cost' and insert 'a new extinguisher has been purchased for'.
- Page 6, Item 6 a, Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee - Storage building on sportsfield
Delete the word 'it' from the second line of the first paragraph.

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

Some Parish Councillors said that they tend to forget to bring their copies of the minutes to the meeting. It was suggested that the minutes be provided with the agenda or additional copies be made available at the meeting. Mr. Stock disagreed with the first suggestion and said that it was important that Parish Councillors received their minutes as soon after a meeting as possible, e.g. so that they could be reminded of action points. He was not happy with multiple additional copies of minutes being made unnecessarily. He did however suggest that two spare copies of the minutes should be sufficient. This was agreed by all present.

b) Review of actions

- **Place notice in Parish Magazine re PEAP Environmental steering Group**

A notice will appear in the October issue of the Parish Magazine. Notices have been put on our notices boards.

- **Sign Doe Sport agreement re MPPA resurfacing and pay deposit before the 1st September 2000**

This action point has been completed.

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

This item to be discussed under 3 e, Specific Items - Walkern Road bridge (on page 3 of these minutes).

- **Instruct Websters to fit a replacement floodlighting lamp at the MPPA**

This action point has been completed.

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

This action point has been completed.

The missing panes of glass have now been replaced with plastic ones.

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

This action has not been completed. Refer to item to be discussed under 4 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Traffic-calming and safety of crossing in Station Road (on page 7 of these minutes).

- **Write to Kevin Jones and Jeff Skidmore re the re-instatement of litterbin on sportsfield**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to Jeff Skidmore asking him to strim the uncultivated allotments as soon as possible**
This action point has been completed.
- **EHDC - Local health improvement programme conference - 13th July 2000**
Mr. Clark said that he had been unable to attend the conference.
- **Arrange to meet with Three Valleys Water Reinstatement Team when they visit the village**
Mr. Filer reported that he had sent two faxes to Three Valleys Water but had received no replies. He said that Three Valleys Water had carried out some of the repair work required, but a lot had not been completed.
Mr. Filer and Mr. Stock to inspect all the problem areas reported. **Action: D. Filer/D. Stock**
- **Arrange for information board at Watton Green to be erected as soon as possible**
This item to be discussed under 4 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Watton Green (on page 2 of these minutes).
- **Send invitation to commemorative church service on 31.12.00 to Hertfordshire University**
This action point has been completed.
- **Give the name and address of the Secretary and Registrar of the University of Hertfordshire to the Clerk**
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to EHDC re fir trees behind play area on Great Innings Estate**
This action point has been completed.
- **Send letter of thanks to John Booker Sports & Social Club**
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to Sports & Social Club re sight screens**
This action point has been completed.
Mr. Knight reported that, to date, the Cricket Club had still not returned a signed copy of the letter. Mr. Knight to chase. **Action: I. Knight**
- **Send a signed copy of the Community Hall accounts to McCash and Hay**
This action point has been completed.
- **Purchase new computer and printer**
This action point has been completed.
- **Accept revised quotation from Bob Adams for external re-decoration of Community Hall**
This action point has been completed.
- **Stick down the lifting parts of the Main Hall flooring in the Community Hall**
This action point has been completed.
- **Ask Sports & Social Club to make sure that windows and doors of the Community Hall are locked after use**
Mr. Knight said that he had spoken to the various groups in the Sports & Social Club.
Mr. Meischke said that to his knowledge there had been no further problems.
- **Write to Cled Fursland (Cricket Club) re location of the electricity cables near the MPPA**
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to Jeff Skidmore re weed killing around the Community Hall, car park and play area**
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to EHDC re planning application for Carringtons, Perrywood Lane**
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to EHDC re planning application for 20 Lammas Road**
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to Mr. Singleton regretfully accepting his resignation as a Parish Councillor**

This action point has been completed.

- **Place notice advertising for a new Parish Councillor on all the Parish Council notice boards**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership) re condition of the grass verges and the cutting back of trees in Station Road, and the removal of the Laburnum tree in Hazeldell**

Mr. Stock said that this action point was not carried-out.

The grass cutting had now been done throughout the village and the trees cut back on Station Road.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to EH Highways Partnership informing them that the Parish Council is pleased with the present condition of the HCC-owned grass verges in the village and would like confirmation that this is to be the standard for all future grass cuts. Also, asking them how many cuts is carried-out each year.

Action: D. Stock/ J. Allsop

- **Return completed HCC - Public sector pledge questionnaire**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to EHDC re naming of the new development on the former garage site in the High Street**

This action point has been completed.

- **See if Village Web Site leaflet is of interest to the Parish Council**

Mr. Dunhill reported that he had linked the village web site with our own.

3 Specific items

a) Co-option of a new Parish Councillor

Because the Returning Officer at EHDC had notified us that no request had been received from the electors in our parish for an election to fill the vacancy on the Parish Council, the vacancy was advertised on our Parish Council notice boards. Applicants were invited to respond in writing by the 15th of September 2000.

Mr. Stock reported that two written applications had been received (i.e. from Mrs Sarah Davies and Mr. Keith Bewley), copies of which were given to all Parish Councillors prior to today's meeting.

After explaining the procedure, Mr. Stock handed out ballot slips and a secret ballot then took place. He subsequently announced that Mrs. Davies had received six votes and Mr. Bewley had received two votes, and therefore Mrs. Davies was duly elected as a Parish Councillors.

Mr. Stock to write to both candidates accordingly.

Action: D. Stock

b) Parish Map

Mr. Meischke said that part of the Parish Map shows land that is not actually in the parish of Watton-at-Stone. His son, Jonathan Meischke, will therefore indicate the Parish boundary with an orange dotted-line. Jonathan will also prepare two versions of the map, one with the existing photographs and the other with the paintings produced by Don Chandler.

Mr. Meischke said that he would visit all Parish Councillors with these maps so that the final version can be agreed at the next Parish Council meeting.

Action: J. Meischke

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

Mr. Stock reported that a cheque had been received from Wimpey Homes for the cost of purchasing two dog-waste bins for the village. Mr. Poulton has sent a letter of thanks to Wimpey Homes informing them where the bins are to be located. A notice is also to appear in the Parish Magazine stating that Wimpey Homes has donated two dog-waste bins and where they are to be located.

d) Three Valley Water trenches

This item was discussed under 2 b, Review of Actions - Arrange to meet with Three Valleys Water Reinstatement Team when they visit the village (on page 2 of these minutes).

e) Walkern Road bridge

Mrs. Dinnin reported that the new signing in Walkern Road is now in place. However, no line marking had been done. Mrs. Dinnin and Mr. Knight said that the new signing was not as discussed at their site meeting with Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership).

Mrs. Dinnin to contact Ron Jack accordingly.

Action: C. Dinnin

f) Future of the recycling site at Watton JMI School

Mr. Stock reported that Mr. Poulton had met with Sarah Adams (EHDC Re-cycling Officer) on 24th August to look at possible sites for the relocation of the recycling facility. They looked at Mill Lane and the Community Hall car park and agreed that both sites were unsuitable. Therefore, no progress had been made on this subject.

Mrs. McCash said that no formal decision about the future of the recycling site had been made by the School Governors. She then said that the next meeting of the Board of Governors will be held in November and she will ensure that this item is placed on the agenda.

g) Parish Environmental Action Plan – steering group

Mr. Stock said that notices had been placed on the Parish Council notice boards asking for volunteers to form a steering group. He said that he had spoken to a number of people on the subject (including the Conservation Society) and was disappointed that there had not been a very positive response. To date, nobody has contacted the Clerk for more information.

This item to remain on the agenda.

Agenda: 10/00

h) Strim branches along Lammas river bank

Mr. Stock reported that some of the branches of the trees along the riverbank are obstructing the footpath once again. It was agreed that Jeff Skidmore and Michael Stanley be asked to quote for the work required to clear the obstructions.

Action: J. Allsop

i) Reinstatement of bollards in School Lane

Mr. Dunhill said that he had requested HCC to place an order for the relocation of the bollard in School Lane. This he said had now been done.

It was agreed that the Parish Council write to HCC asking them to relocate the bollard without delay, in particular because the current position of the bollard is allowing motorbikes to ride, at speed, up and down this section of School Lane.

Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop

j) Condition of footpath between the two sides of Hazeldell

Mr. Stock said that Mrs. McCash had asked for this item to be placed on the agenda. The footpath is badly overgrown with weeds and has numerous holes along its length.

Mr. Stock reported that Mr. Poulton had, as a District Councillor, contacted EH Highways Partnership regarding the state of the footpath. In response, Mr. R. Jack (EH Highways Partnership) had written stating that he would arrange for work to be carried out as soon as the current fuel crisis is over.

The work has not yet been carried-out.

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

Mr. Stock reported that an application had been submitted to Groundwork Hertfordshire for spring bulbs; for planting at the southern end of the village. Applications had to be submitted by 15th September and a decision will be known soon.

Mrs. McCash suggested that senior children at Watton School could help with bulb planting.

This item to remain on the agenda.

l) Install holly bushes in gap in sportsfield hedge in School Lane

This item is an action point outstanding from last year.

Mr. Dunhill said that he still has a small holly bush and will plant it in December. The Clerk said that she could also provide one or two hawthorn bushes. It was agreed to plant both the holly and hawthorn in the gap in the hedge.

This item to be placed on the agenda for the Parish Council meeting to be held on the 15th November 2000.

Agenda: 11/00

m) Circulation

Mr. Filer asked for this item to be placed on the agenda because certain Parish Councillors are holding onto circulation items for an unreasonable amount of time.

Mr. Stock said that it was very important (and fair to all concerned) that items on circulation be passed on without delay.

He then suggested that the following guidelines be adopted.

- All items must be passed on within two days of their receipt.

- If any Parish Councillor cannot achieve this, the item(s) should be passed on immediately. The Parish Councillor involved can, if required, ask for the item(s) to be returned to him/her at the end of the circulation.
- A Parish Councillor can ask to be put at the end of the circulation list in the event of on-going problems.
- All items must be signed and dated by each Parish Councillor.

These guidelines were agreed by all.

Parish Councillors agreed the following order of circulation.

Mr. N. Poulton
 Mr. D. Stock
 Mr. J. Meischke
 Mrs. H. McCash
 Mrs. C. Dinnin
 Mr. I. Knight
 Mrs. S. Davies
 Mr. D. Filer
 Mr. V. Dunhill
 Mr. C. Clark

4 Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

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

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

Mrs. McCash said that the auditors (Pannell, Kerr & Forster) had made some amendments to the layout of the Parish Council accounts for the year 1999/2000 and now requires these to be agreed and signed by the Parish Council.

All Parish Councillors were given a copy of the amended accounts prior to today's meeting.

Mr. Filer proposed that the accounts be approved by the Parish Council and that the balance sheets for the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council be signed by the Vice-Chairman and the Clerk (as Responsible Financial officer). Mr. Knight seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Mr. Stock and the Clerk then signed two copies of the balance sheet.

The Clerk to send a copy of the signed accounts to the auditors.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Date of next meeting**

Mrs. McCash to liaise with members of the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee to arrange a mutually convenient date.

Action: H. McCash

Mr. Filer raised some questions concerning our reserves. It was agreed that this subject would be discussed during our next Budget & Finance Sub-Committee.

Agenda: B & F

Community Hall Trustees

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

- **Minutes and report on meeting held on 12th September 2000**

All Parish Councillors were copied with the minutes prior to today's meeting.

Mr. Meischke highlighted various points.

- **Bench seat situated adjacent to the playground**

Mr. Meischke proposed that the Parish Council accepts the Community Hall Trustee's recommendation to dismantle the remains of the seat and not replace it. Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke to arrange for the removal of the bench. **Action: N. Poulton/J. Meischke**

- **Vandalism**

Mr. Meischke highlighted the series of events that occurred during the summer holidays and the disappointing way in which the police dealt (or did not deal) with the situation. PC Ivens (our Rural

Comment [C1]:

Community Liaison Officer) had reported that Hertford Police had not made him aware of the problems in Watton-at-Stone at that time and is very upset by what had occurred.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to the Chief Constable at County Police Headquarters, Welwyn Garden City, outlining the sequence of events and stating that the Parish Council feel that Watton-at-Stone has been let down badly (a copy of this letter to be sent to PC Ivens and Mr. Oliver Heald, our MP). Mr. Meischke and Mr. Poulton will draft a letter to be sent out. **Action: J. Meischke/N. Poulton**

- **Estimate for decoration works at the Community Hall**

Mr. Meischke read out the following quotation (dated 13th September) from Robert Adams.

Here as requested are my estimates for the following painting work at the Community Hall, School Lane, Watton-at-Stone.

Ladies and Gents Toilets, Doors and Frames only

1. Outer doors: Clean down, apply two coats of Teak Sadolin Extra.
2. Inner doors: Wash down, clean down and apply two coats of an anti-vandal paint, this paint comes in grey, green, black and red.

Price: £240

Main Entrance Passage

1. Painted woodwork: Wash down, clean down, make good and apply one undercoat and one gloss coat of white paint.
2. Stained woodwork: Wash down, clean down and apply two coats of Sadolin Extra Teal.

Price: £276.00

Function Room

1. Painted woodwork: Wash down, clean down, make good and apply one undercoat and one gloss coat of white paint.
2. Stained woodwork: Wash down, clean down and apply two coats of Sadolin Extra Teal.
3. Wall around serving hatch: Apply two coats of selected emulsion to the height of 6'

Price £345.00

Mr. Meischke proposed that this quotation be accepted. Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

Recreation & Amenities

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

- **Storage building on sportsfield**

Mr. Meischke said that there was nothing further to report.

This item to remain on the agenda under Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee.

- **Metal flood-guttering at Community Hall**

Mr. Meischke said that this needs replacing. Because he is going away over the next few days, it was agreed to ask Don Chandler to fill the gutter with sand without delay.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Meischke will arrange to replace the flood-guttering on his return.

Action: J. Meischke

Environment

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

- **Watton Green**

Mr. Stanley has cut the grass on Watton Green and the Lammas. However, on Watton Green, the cut was not close enough to the boundary of the site. Mr. Stock has spoken to Mr. Stanley who has agreed to correct this.

Mr. Stock, Mr. Filer and Mr. Dunhill met on Watton Green with the intension of installing the information board. However, they soon realised that, due to the condition of the ground, the task could take them a long time to complete. Subsequently, during an on-site meeting with Mr. Stock, Mr. Stanley said that he could install the information board at the agreed location for approximately £40. Mr. Stock has instructed Mr. Stanley to do the work, and has persuaded HELP to pay for it (i.e., during a discussion with them when they were chasing him for financial reports, that he had in fact given them long ago). The work is to be done at the same time as the ditch strim now scheduled for the end of this month.

Mr. Stock to chase Sian Freer (of CMS) for her contribution to the text for the information board.

Action: D. Stock

- **Village Pump**

Mr. Stock had noted that some of the new planting around the pump is missing and/or dead, and has spoken to Mr. Poulton about it. Mr. Poulton has agreed to see what plants need replacing and will arrange for them to be purchased and planted.

Action: N. Poulton

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

- **Footpath on the Station Road bridge**

Mr. Stock reported that the new footpath on the Station Road bridge had still not been installed, and that he had written and spoken to Mr. R. Jack (EH Highways Partnership) on the subject. Mr. Jack seemed to be very negative about this footpath and favoured the repairs to the footpath link in Hazeldell instead.

During discussions with Mr. Jack, Mr. Stock was told that Railtrack's requirements for the work would be expensive to satisfy and that he and his boss would re-visit the site. Mr. Stock has asked Mr. Jack to provide a written response to his letter.

Mr. Stock said that the Parish Council must continue to press for the installation of the footpath (which was promised for May/June of this year.) at this main gateway to our village. We have achieved improved pedestrian safety on the other two bridges which form main gateways to the village (i.e., in Walkern Road and at the southern entrance to Watton) and Station Road must not be an exception. This was agreed by all present.

Mr. Stock to chase Mr. Jack on the subject.

Action: D. Stock

- **Traffic-calming in Station Road**

Mrs. McCash said that she had made no progress on this subject. She had not written to Mr. R. Jack and had been unable to contact him by telephone.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to Mr. Jack asking him to what can be done, and when, to improve the safety aspects of this stretch of road which contains a school crossing-point and is a main route for traffic (much of which is at a speed in excess of 30 mph) leaving and entering the village.

Mrs. McCash to write to Mr. Jack accordingly.

Action: H. McCash

i) **Report**

Mrs. Dinnin carried-out the sportsfield report on the 20th September, the result of which is as follows.

- **Sportsfield:**

Condition of grass	Good.
Litter	Good.
Dog-waste bin and fouling	None.
Netball posts	Locked – OK.
General	Good.

- **Children's Playground:**

Condition of surface	-
Litter/Litter bin	Good.
Large swings	OK – seats in poor condition.
Small swings	Fine
See-Saw	Squeaks.
Slide	OK.
Comments	Generally good.

- **Community Hall:**

General Condition	Excellent.
Litter bin	Good.
Car Park	Good – some litter.
	Good – looks as if weeds have been sprayed.

- **Multi-Purpose Play Area:**

Surface	Clean.
Boundary Fencing	Good.
Tennis nets	Both nets up. One winder missing.
Litter	Good.
General	Weeds around edges.

- **Great Innings Play Area:**

Equipment	Good, one large swing at an angle.
Surfaces	Good.
Litter	Fair.

Dog-waste bin and fouling	Good.
Comments	Some graffiti on train type equipment.
• Allotments Area:	
Access	Gate on Church path poor.
Condition of paths between allotments	OK.
Condition of Allotments cultivation	OK.
Condition of Allotments not under cultivation	OK.
Litter	OK.
Comments	OK. Large grey tank of water ?? Safe ??
• Culverts on Mill Lane	
Litter and rubbish in and culverts	Cannot access – too many weeds.
Dog-fouling	OK.
Comments	Generally tidy.
• Salt bins	
Perrywood Lane	OK.
Great Innings	OK.
Station Road	OK.
Moorymead Close	Low in salt.
Hazeldell	OK.
• Dog-waste bins	
Footpath 17	OK
Sportsfield	OK.
Church Walk	OK.
Walkern Road	OK.
Station Road	OK.
High Street (by Memorial)	OK.

- It was agreed that a budget provision be made for replacing the 4 seats on the large bay swings.

Action: H. McCash

- Mr. Meischke agreed to inspect the large tank on the allotments to see if it is safe. **Action: J. Meischke**

5 Planning

a) Applications

i) Amon Luin, Walkern Road

Special needs adaptation to form bedroom, wet room, all with conservatory link to main building

Items 5 a I and 5 b iii were discussed together.

Mr. Stock said that the first application was refused by EHDC planning officers and was not discussed by the planning committee. He then read out the following extract from the EHDC decision notice dated 10th August 2000.

‘The reason(s) for the Council’s decision to refuse permission for the development is/are:

1. The application site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt as defined in the East Hertfordshire Local Plan wherein permission will not be given except in very special circumstances for development for purposes other than those required for mineral extraction, agriculture, small scale facilities for participatory sport and recreation or other uses appropriate to a rural area. The special circumstances that exist in this case do not outweigh the other considerations and the proposal would therefore be contrary to policy RA2 of the Local Plan.
2. The cumulative effect of the proposed extension{s}, together with the extensions previously added to the property, would result in a building of excessive size, out of keeping with the character and appearance of the original dwelling, to the detriment of the rural character of the area, and contrary to policy BE6 of the East Hertfordshire Local Plan’.

Mr. Stock said that the new application (i.e. 5 b iii) is identical to the original one. However, the applicant has now requested that the application is presented to the planning committee for a decision.

The Parish Council response to the first application was 'no comment'. Mr. Meischke proposed that the Parish Council supports this application for the reasons of the special needs. Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour. The Clerk to write accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**

b) Decisions

- i) **Carringtons, Perrywood Lane**
Demolition of existing triple garage
-EHDC permission granted
- ii) **39 Station Road**
Two-storey side extension with porch. Amended scheme.
-EHDC permission granted
- iii) **Amon Luin, Walkern Road**
Special needs adaptation to provide sitting room/conservatory link to bedroom & wet room
-EHDC permission refused

6 Correspondence received

a) EHDC – Street numbering and naming – 1-12 Long Meadow, High Street

EHDC has agreed to the Parish Council's request to name the former garage site as Long Meadow.

b) SQ Environmental Trust re grant application for the resurfacing of the MPPA

The Community Hall Trustee's application for grant aid has been unsuccessful.

c) EHDC – Local Plan review – important Open Space policy

In their letter dated 15th August, EHDC identified the sportsfield as an important open space and asked the Parish Council to identify any other areas on a map provided. Mr. Poulton added the allotments land, the school playing fields and the Great Innings play area. EHDC has been informed.

d) Wimpey Homes – sponsorship of Dog Bins for Watton-at-Stone

This item was discussed on under 3 c, Specific items - Dog-fouling: dog-waste bin for Mill Lane (on page 3 of these minutes).

e) Watton-at-Stone Football Club – permanent line marking of the football pitch on the sportsfield

Mr. Stock read out the following letter (dated 21st August) from the Football Club.

'As with last year, we would like to have the football pitch at the Meadow permanently marked out by Highground Contacting Ltd. I have yet to contact them but I estimate that the cost will be around £70 +VAT.

Would it be possible, that the invoice from Highground be made out to the Watton Parish Council so that the VAT can be recouped by yourselves, and then for you to invoice Watton-at-Stone Football Club for the net amount as last year.

Look forward to hearing from you on this matter.'

Mrs. Dinnin proposed that the Parish Council agree to this and invoice the football club accordingly. Mr. Meischke seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

f) EHDC – Informal Liaison meetings

Mr. Stock read out a letter (dated 10th August) from David Beales (Director of Planning & Property, EHDC) inviting the Parish Council to attend regular and reasonably frequent meetings (e.g. every four months or so) with the development Control Team Leaders and himself. These meetings are informal (with no minutes taken) and their purpose is to discuss local planning issues so that a better understanding and insight of the area can be gained.

It was agreed to write to EHDC stating that the Parish Council is interested in attending these meetings.

Action: J. Allsop

g) EHDC – Casual vacancy on Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

This item was discussed on under 3 a, Specific Items - Co-option of a new Parish Councillor (on page 3 of these minutes).

h) Hertfordshire Police Authority - Parish Council Community Safety meeting

Hertfordshire Police Authority will be holding a Parish Council Community Safety Meeting on 9th November. Mr. Stock said that Mr. Poulton is able to attend this meeting. Mr. Meischke said that he would try and attend with Mr. Poulton.

Action: N. Poulton/J. Meischke

i) EHDC -Landscape schemes within East Herts

Mr. Stock read out a letter from EHDC (dated 26th July) informing us that money is available for landscape schemes. Such schemes can consist of tree and shrub planting, grass seeding, provision of paving, fencing, street furniture (e.g. bollards and seating) on primarily council-owned land. There is also a budget for tree planting.

It was agreed to put this letter on high-speed circulation, with a list attached, asking Parish Councillors to highlight areas that they feel would benefit from landscaping.

Action: J. Allsop

j) Mrs. Barbara Knight – postal deliveries

Mr. Stock reported that there had been problems with the postal service in Hazeldell. The post is often not delivered until very late in the afternoon, and sometimes not at all at weekends. He then read out a letter from Mrs. Knight (dated 6th September), which included a copy of a letter she had sent to the Royal Mail together with a petition signed by 118 Hazeldell residents.

It was agreed that the Parish Council should also write to the Royal Mail expressing their views of this unsatisfactory situation.

Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop

k) EHDC – Rospa Play Ground Inspections

Mr. Stock said that a letter had been received from EHDC (dated 5th September) informing us that the approximate cost of the playground inspection will be £62, and that the inspection is to take place during the week commencing the 2nd October 2000.

l) E H Highways Partnership – Walkern Road Bridge over the River Beane

Mr. Stock said that Mr. Jack (EH Highways Partnership) had written to us about the Walkern Road bridge and stated that he had not realised that a written response to the points raised at the site meeting was required.

m) Audit Commission – the audit of Parish, Town and Community Councils – issues for stakeholders

Mr. Stock said that the Audit Commission had written a document on the current audit procedures and possible changes that could be made. They have asked for the Parish Council comments on this document by 30th September. Mr. Stock read out a letter of reply drafted by Mr. Poulton. At their request, Mr. Filer and Mrs. McCash were then copied with the letter and agreed to give their comments to the Clerk, so that a response could be made by the deadline date.

The following letter was subsequently sent to the Audit Commission.

‘Watton-at-Stone Parish Council wishes to make the following observations to your paper on the audit.

We would like to see the annual audit return to a receipts and payments systems, with auditing carried out on an annual basis. This would uncover any fraud or errors that have occurred.

This system would be reasonable for Councils with a precept of £25,000 per year but a more rigorous system over this amount.

The annual audit could be carried out by an approved local auditor rather than a large city firm and this may well cut down the cost.

Finally you mention in your report the National Association of Local Councils who could assist. Could I draw your attention to the fact that not all Parish and Town Councils belong to that association.

We also feel that it is essential that some formal training is given to Parish Council Clerks and Councillors, who after all are accountable to their local electorate.

We look forward to hearing from you on your findings.’

n) Village of the year competition 2000 – Results

Mr. Stock reported that Watton-at-Stone had not been one of the winners in the Village of the Year competition. The results only gave the names of the winning villages, in their various areas and categories, but did not tell us how well or badly we had done as a village. The former competition, i.e. the Best Kept Village Competition, gave each village a copy of the marks they had obtained.

It was agreed to write and ask where we came in the overall competition, and how the competition was judged.

Action: J. Allsop

7 Reports from other Organisations

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

Mr. Stock said that the Conservation Society had commented on the fly-tipping at Clappers Lane (Church Lane) and off the Datchworth Road.

Railtrack have been informed of the fly-tipping at Clappers Lane.

Mr. Stock had noted that the fly-tipping in Clappers Lane took place where the bank had been eroded.

He therefore suggested that fly-tipping at this spot might be less convenient if the bank was reinstated. It was agreed that a letter be sent to Railtrack and EH Highways Partnership requesting that the bank be reinstated.

Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop

- **Watton-at-Stone Youth Club**

Mrs. Dinnin said that they are still trying to find a suitable paid youth club leader.

8 Accounts/Correspondence

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash

Payments

Stamps 25 x 19p, 7 x 1p

4.82

4.82

Receipts

Allotment rent

3.50

3.50

Cheques required

K. Jones	48 hours litterpick		203.52
Cornhill Insurance	Additional premium		148.62
J. Allsop	Light bulbs		24.00
J. Allsop	August salary		447.80
HCC	Laser printer, + CD disc.		410.98
N. Poulton	Flowers for C. Bewley		11.99
K. Jones	36 hours litterpick		152.64
M. Stanley	Grass cutting of Lammas & Watton Green		800.00
J. Allsop	Phone to 04.08.00	23.50	
	Stamps, 50 x 27p	13.50	
	Newspaper	9.38	43.38
Diocesan Board	MPPA ground rent		90.00
HCC	Computer and discs		681.01
J. Allsop	September Salary	447.80	
	Phone to 04.09.00	19.75	
	Stamps 20 x 27p	5.40	
			<u>472.95</u>
			<u>3486.89</u>

Cheques received

Wimpey Homes	For 2 dog-waste bins		395.00
			<u>395.00</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash

Payments

Floodlighting to 26.07.00

34.00

Trevaine Duckworth – Pavilion hire

28.00

Floodlighting to 12.09.00

46.00

C. Straker – 8 hours use of Main Hall

64.00

172.00

Receipts

12 Roof tiles

20.45

Screws & nails for MPPA

1.94

22.39

Cheques required

D. Bunyan	Repair to roof tiles		118.44
Hertford Installations	To install new hand dryer		323.12
David Webster	Install new floodlight at MPPA		270.25
Eastern Energy	To 20.07.00		136.34
Doe Sport	Deposit payment for the resurfacing of the MPPA		3471.54
Stevenage Glass	Replacement to two broken windows		177.90
C. Bewley	32 hours cleaning		160.00
EHDC	Return of part of £100 summer play scheme deposit		7.40
EHDC	Rates for August and September 2000		166.00
Mr. R. Adams	External redecoration work		625.00
Mr. D. Clarke	External redecoration work		<u>420.00</u>

5875.99**Cheques received**

Sports & Social Club	Hire of Community Hall facilities	432.50
Georgina Pay	Main Hall hire	442.80
Watton School	Pavilion hire	10.50
Mrs. Gilbey	Main Hall hire	50.00
Mrs. Georgina Pay	Main Hall hire	18.00
Mrs. Fowler	Pavilion hire	21.00
Mrs. Hay	Pavilion hire	48.00
Mrs. Proctor	Pavilion hire	<u>20.00</u>
		<u>1042.80</u>

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

9 Chairman's / Clerk's Report

Mr. Stock reported on the following items.

- **Broken window at Community Hall**

Mr. Stock read out the following letter from the parent of the child involved.

'Please find enclosed a letter from my son to the Parish Council regarding the damages caused to the pavilion during the summer holidays.

Needless to say I am very embarrassed and extremely sorry that my child was involved in an incident of that nature.

Please accept my apologies for his behaviour.'

Mr. Stock then read out the son's letter.

'To the Parish Council

I am very sorry I will never break a window at the pavilion again.'

It was pleasing to receive such a letter, and because it must have taken courage to write to the Parish Council, it was agreed that the Vice-Chairman writes accepting his apology.

Action: D. Stock

- **Conifer trees at Willowdene**

Mr. Meischke said that the conifer trees on the boundary between Willowdene and Mill Lane are overhanging the footpath. People going down Mill Lane have to walk into the road because of the obstructing branches. This is of particular concern because of young children going to the Scout Hut.

Mrs. Dinnin to find out the name of the person to contact.

Action: C. Dinnin

After the completion of the above action point, a letter to be sent asking for the branches of the conifer trees to be cut back.

Action: D. Stock/ J. Allsop

- **Lavatera shrub in High Street planting scheme (opposite Watton Place Clinic)**

The Lavatera shrub is over-hanging the footpath.

The Clerk said that she would arrange to cut back the shrub as soon as possible.

Action: J. Allsop

- **The meeting closed at 9.21 p.m.**

- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 18th October 2000.**