

A meeting of the Wotton-at-Stone Parish Council was held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 21st March 2001 at 7.15 p.m.

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

1 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 21st February 2001**

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

b) Review of actions

- **Inspect liners of litterbins on sportsfield**

Mr. Poulton said that he had inspected the litter bins on the sportsfield. The damaged liner in the bin near the Rectory does not need replacing at present. However, two new metal liners have been purchased from Glasdon UK. One has been placed in the litterbin at the Community Hall and the other is being kept as a spare (and is stored in the locked cupboard in the Main Hall).

- **Confirm that action has been taken by Sports & Social Club re water meter cover**

This action point has been completed.

- **Monitor presence/absence of litter in the village**

This item to be discussed under 3 b, Specific Items – Litterpicking in village (on pages 4 and 5 of these minutes).

- **Draft letter to HCC re school admissions for the year 2002-2003**

Mr. Clark said that he had completed this action point and will give a copy of the letter to the Clerk.

Action: C. Clark

- **Complete and sign MAFF forms re Lammas planting scheme**

This item to be discussed under 4 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Lammas (on pages 6 and 7 of these minutes).

- **Chase British Telecom re reinstatement of door to the telephone box at Station Road/Glebe Close**

Mrs. McCash said that the door to the telephone box has not been reinstated. The Clerk to contact British Telecom again.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Complete derogation forms and return them to the FRCA**

This item to be discussed under 4 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Lammas (on pages 6 and 7 of these minutes).

- **Write to HCC Bridges Department re wooden footbridge over River Beane at southern-end of village**

This action point has been completed.

Mr. Stock read out the following response (dated 28th February) received from the HCC Bridge Maintenance Department.

‘Thank you for your letter of 29th February regarding the footbridge at the south end of the village. I am pleased to confirm that temporary warning signs were erected at each end of the bridge on Thursday 22nd February. I can confirm that an order has been placed with Kettles Limited of Amptill to apply anti-slip materials to the existing timber deck planks.

These materials rely upon adhesion properties and consequently it is important that the timber deck is as dry as possible before applying the material to the deck. It is therefore unlikely that weather conditions will permit application before May/June.

- **Send plans for ornate village sign and its proposed location to EHDC**

This action point has been completed.

Mr. Poulton read out a letter from EHDC (dated 16th March) as follows.

‘Thank you for the copy of drawings for the new village sign.

I have no objection to the proposed location. The drawings do not show the complete sign, I believe the Datchworth Green sign is timber and mounted on an oak post and, as such this will appear quite satisfactory.’

Mr. Poulton said that the same company that Datchworth used would make the sign.

- **Write to Environment Agency re concrete fixture on the Lammas and arrange site meeting with them**

This action point has been completed.

Mr. Poulton said that, to date, he had not been contacted by the Environment Agency.

- **Review the Clerk’s contract of employment**

This item to be discussed under 4 a, Budget & Finance Sub-Committee – Contract of employment (on page 5 of these minutes).

- **Instruct David Bunyan to repair all the roof guttering and replace any broken roof tiles**

This action point has been completed.

Mr. Poulton said that David Bunyan would be carrying-out the repair to the guttering very soon. However, he will be using a roofing contractor to repair the broken roof tiles.

- **Contact floor-cleaning contractors**

Mr. Poulton said that Care Group Limited (of Hertford) had submitted a quotation (dated 16th March) to professionally clean the floors of the Community Hall.

The prices quoted show a small increase over those for last year’s work.

To scrub off:	Canteen (Pavilion)	£39	plus VAT
	Kitchen	£14	plus VAT
	Common parts and toilets	£17	plus VAT
	Sports Hall	£142	plus VAT
To seal:	Canteen, kitchen, common parts and toilets	£45	plus VAT

Mr. Poulton then read out the following comments from Care Group Limited.

‘The flooring in question is safety flooring. Whilst the application of polish will make the floor easier to maintain it should be noted that each coat of sealant applied will slightly reduce the non-slip nature of the floor. Safety flooring is a functional floor covering and therefore has a higher maintenance requirement than standard floor covering.’

After discussion, it was agreed that the sealant work should not be carried-out for safety reasons.

In addition, Care Group Limited was asked to quote for the following work.

To jet wash:	Two changing rooms and two shower rooms	£65	plus VAT
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Mr. Meischke proposed that Care Group Limited’s quotation be accepted, with the exception of the sealing work. Mrs. Davies seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Care Group Limited to be asked to carry-out the work at the beginning of April. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Order four-swing seats from Wicksteed Leisure, instruct them to repair safety surface and inspect see-saw**

This action point has been completed.

- **Meet on-site at sportsfield playground with RoSPA**

This item to be discussed under 4 a, Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee – RoSPA – Annual playground inspection (on page 6 of these minutes).

- **Order two boot-scrapers from County Supplies**

This action point has been completed.

County Supplies to be contacted to find out when delivery will be made. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Obtain quotation from Jeff Skidmore for installing the two boot-scrapers**

Mr. Poulton reported that Mr. Skidmore had been unable to provide a quotation to date, but will do so before the April meeting.

- **Write to Sports & Social Club re condition of Community Hall**

This action point has been completed.

- **Sign Sports & Social Club hire agreement**
This action point has been completed.
Mr. Poulton gave Mr. Knight one copy of the signed agreement for the Sports & Social Club.
- **Accept Jono Meischke's quotation for the graphic design work on the information board**
This action point has been completed.
- **Contact Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership) re traffic-calming for Station Road**
This item to be discussed under 4 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Traffic-calming Station Road (on page 6 of these minutes).
- **Look at planting plan for the Lammas**
This item to be discussed under 4 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Lammas (on pages 6 and 7 of these minutes).
- **Order additional shrubs to replace hedging plants that have died**
This item to be discussed under 4 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Lammas (on pages 6 and 7 of these minutes).
- **Write to EHDC re planning application for Great Innings**
This action point has been completed.
- **Give Mr. Stock plans for storage shed on sportsfield**
This action point has been completed.
- **Contact each Parish Councillor re plans for storage shed and write to EHDC accordingly**
Mr. Stock contacted all Parish Councillors to tell them that the plans given to the Parish Council by the Cricket Club were the same as those in the planning application received from EHDC.
The planning department at EHDC has been informed that the Parish Council has no objections to the application.
- **Write to EHDC re planning application for 122 High Street**
This action point has been completed.
- **Place correspondence from Hertfordshire Constabulary on circulation**
This action point has been completed.
- **Notify Hertfordshire Police authority that Mr. Poulton will be attending the launch**
This action point has been completed.
- **Give Village events 2001 forms to Memorial Hall committee**
Mrs. Dinnin said that the forms have not been seen since the meeting, and she is therefore unable to complete this action point.
- **Respond to regional planning guidance for the South East**
This action point has been completed.
- **Contact EHDC re bus permit bulk-issue**
This action point has been completed.
- **Attend and report on Datchworth Parish Conference**
Mr. Poulton reported that he, Mrs. Dinnin and the Clerk had attended the Inter Parish Conference on Thursday 15th March. Due to the lengthy agenda, the following speakers were invited to talk for 10 minutes each.
Maggie Donovan – Chief Executive of East and North Herts NHS Trust
Ian Blomeley – Countryside Access Officer
Peter Garrett – Countryside Management Service
David Standen – EH Highways Partnership
John Ivens – Community Police Officer
Aston Parish Council has agreed to hold next year's Inter Parish Conference. Mr. Poulton said that Aston had hosted this event two years ago and therefore suggested that Watton-at-Stone should offer to take their place (Watton-at-Stone last hosted the event in 1994). This was agreed. Mr. Poulton to contact the Chairman of Aston Parish Council.
Action: N. Poulton
This item to be placed on the agenda for November 2001. **Agenda: 11.01**

- **Inform Hertfordshire Constabulary that Parish Council is unable to attend meeting on 7th March**

This action point has been completed.

Mr. Poulton said that the Hertfordshire Constabulary had subsequently contacted us to ask if a member of the Parish Council could attend the meeting because the Foot and Mouth outbreak and bombing had been added to the agenda.

Mr. Poulton said that he had cancelled a previous engagement so that he could attend the meeting.

- **Inform Rodney Ranzetta that Community Hall facilities will be made available for the Community Service**

This action point has been completed.

Mr. Poulton said that Rodney Ranzetta had now written (letter dated 16th March) to ask if the Churches serving Watton could have the use of the sportsfield after the Community Service on the 2nd July. The plan is for people to stay on after the service and have lunch together (providing their own food) and for a few stalls to be set up sell books, etc. Also, they would like to arrange a charity run around the sportsfield.

It was agreed that the Churches serving Watton be allowed the additional use of the sportsfield. However, they would be responsible for all health and safety issues.

Mr. Ranzetta to be informed accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

The Football and Cricket clubs to be informed that the Community Hall and sportsfield facilities will not be available on the 2nd July 2001.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Inform Football and Cricket Club about Community Service**

This action point has been completed.

- **Try and obtain a copy of the literature on funding for play equipment**

The Clerk has had no success with this action point.

- **Arrange for a replacement notice board to be made for MPPA**

This item to be placed on the agenda for the Parish Council meeting in May.

Agenda: 5/01

- **Damage to safety-surface under see-saw**

RoSPA will inspect the safety-surface in May, during their safety inspections in the area.

c) Action points outstanding for more than two months

- **Chase Hertfordshire police for article re Special Police Constable and place advertisement in parish magazine**

Mrs. Davies reported that she had obtained the article and placed an advertisement in the April edition of the Parish Magazine.

- **Try to remove graffiti on Community Hall brick work**

This action point has been completed.

- **Order footpath signs needed within the parish**

Mr. Dunhill said that three footpath signs had been ordered from Morris Gordon Engineering. These signs have the standard HCC logo and appropriate coloured chevrons.

3 Specific Items

a) Update on OFSTED report on Watton Primary School

Mr. Clark gave a summary of the current situation.

Due to the confidential nature of this item, a full report will be given and minuted at the Parish Council meeting in April.

b) Litterpicking in village

It was agreed at the Parish Council meeting in February, to monitor litterpicking and the bins in the village.

Mr. Stock said that soon after the meeting the general condition of the village greatly improved. It was agreed that Onyx (the litterpicking contractors) were doing a good job at present and that bins were being emptied on a regular basis.

Mr. Poulton reminded Parish Councillors of Onyx's agreed schedule of work.

- Week 1 High Street
- Week 2 Great Innings
- Week 3 High Street
- Week 4 Station Road and Hazeldell
Hockerill, Rectory Lane, Glebe Close

Mr. Poulton said that the litterpicking on the Hockerill slope and the emptying the bins outside the George and Dragon Public House, School Lane and Church Walk got missed off the schedule agreed with Onyx.

Prior to the meeting, Mr. Poulton sort the agreement of six Parish Councillors that Don Chandler be paid to litterpick the Hockerill slope and empty the bins mentioned above.

c) Longmeadow development – landscaping scheme

Mr. Poulton said that there is a small problem with the implementation of part of the planting scheme. The first stage of the building and landscaping work, which is now complete, should have included railings along the boundary plus two appropriately sized trees. However, the ownership of this boundary is in contention. The builders have assumed that their boundary goes right up to the HCC footway. However, there is a small strip of land between the HCC footway and the former garage site, the owner of which is currently unknown. This area is on the corner of Great Innings and High Street. Until the ownership of this land is resolved, the railings and trees cannot be installed. However, a planting scheme has been installed in the area.

d) Holly bushes in gap in sportsfield hedge in School Lane

Mr. Dunhill said that he had planted one small holly bush in the gap. It was agreed to look to inspect this area later in the year and if necessary purchase a larger shrub to fill the gap. **Agenda: 09.01**

e) District Plan – Housing needs survey

Prior to the meeting, Mr. Poulton sent all Parish Councillors a memo regarding the current review of the District Plan. All Parish Councillors were copied with a map outlining the six sites that have already been identified for possible further development within the village. They were also copied with a draft housing-needs questionnaire for Watton-at-Stone produced by Mr. Poulton.

The six sites were discussed at a previous Parish Council meeting and it was felt that none should be put forward for development; although if pushed into a corner, the site between the railway line and Glebe Close could be looked at further.

Mr. Poulton said that the problem with Watton-at-Stone is that it has a lot going for it (e.g. a railway station, good road links, shops and a school) and therefore we have very little arguing power to stop further development.

The draft housing-needs survey was discussed. Mr. Filer showed concern about a low or 0% return and its effects. Mr. Poulton said that the Parish Council could choose whether or not to submit the survey to EHDC.

After discussion, it was agreed that residents need to have a say about what housing is required in the village. Some amendments were made to the housing-needs questionnaire. (A copy of which is attached to these minutes). **See attached**

The amended housing-needs survey and a covering letter to be copied to all households in the village.

Action: J. Allsop/Parish Councillors

f) Holiday dates from Parish Councillors

Mr. Poulton reminded all Parish Councillors of the importance of notifying the Clerk of the dates of their holidays and other periods of absence (e.g. that could delay items on circulation etc.).

4 Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

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

• **Annual Audit**

Mrs. McCash said that Pannel Kerr Forster propose to start their audit work on 29th June 2001. It was agreed that the Parish Council should comply with these dates.

The Budget & Finance Sub-Committee will meet on Tuesday 3rd April at 7.30 p.m. in the Community Hall to discuss the accounts figures to be submitted for audit. **Agenda: B & F**

• **Cornhill Insurance – Annual insurance premium for Community Hall**

Mrs. McCash confirmed that the insurance details were correct. The annual premium has increased from £620.27 to £692.01.

Mr. Knight proposed that the insurance premium be paid. Mr. Filer seconded the motion and all present were in favour. **Action: J. Allsop**

• **Contract of employment**

Mrs. McCash said that she is in the process of looking at the Clerk's contract of employment. This item to be discussed at the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee meeting on the 3rd April. **Agenda: B & F**

Community Hall Trustees

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

- **Pavilion, Ladies and Gents toilet doors and frames painting**

Mr. Meischke read out the following letter from Robert Adams (dated 9th March).

'I have been in contact with the manufactures of the anti graffiti paint. The colours available are only light grey, light green, black and red and they come just in 5 litre containers.

The doors and frames require a lot less than 5 litres and I only estimated for 2.5 litres at a cost of £50. Therefore the cost of 5 litres is approximately £110.00

Should you still require this product for these areas then an additional £60 would be added to the original estimate of £242.00.'

Because of the need for a quick response to Mr. Adams, Mr. Meischke said that he had contacted six Parish Councillors and received their agreement for the additional £60 of expenditure.

- **Guttering & roof tiles**

This item was discussed under 2 b, Instruct David Bunyan to repair all the roof guttering and replace any broken roof tiles (on page 2 of these minutes).

Recreation & Amenities

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

- **RoSPA – Annual playground inspection**

A letter had been sent to RoSPA asking them to make a site visit to discuss how best to rectify the problems with the slide. Mr. Poulton said that he had received a faxed response (dated 6th March) from David Yearley (RoSPA), who has made some comments regarding the low risk standard failures noted on the slide. With regard to a site visit, RoSPA would charge somewhere between £180-£350 for a site inspection. Alternatively, they could meet when they are inspecting in Hertfordshire in May and the charge would be £20 on top of the £57 for the site inspection.

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke to meet with David Yearley when he next visits Hertfordshire in May and report back their findings to the Parish Council. **Action: N. Poulton/J. Meischke**

A copy of David Yearley's fax to be placed on circulation.

Action: J. Allsop

- **MPPA**

It is expected that Doe Sport will apply the colour surface to the MPPA in April/ May, provided that there is a sufficiently dry period of weather.

- **Coin meter for the Floodlighting system**

Mr. Meischke said that he had to repair the meter again because it was causing some problems.

Environment

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

- **Watton Green**

Mr. Stock said that Jono Meischke had started the artwork for the information board. He then showed what had been done so far. Some problems are being experienced with the digital versions of the CMS HELP and HCC logos. Mr. Stock asked the Clerk resolve this directly with Jono Meischke.

Action: J. Allsop

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

Mr. Stock said that the Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership) had agreed to our request to install one solid reflector post at either end of the footpath over the bridge. The funding for this work will come from next year's budget, and the posts will be installed soon after 1st April 2001.

- **Traffic-calming Station Road**

Mrs. McCash said that she had spoken to Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership) regarding traffic-calming for Station Road. He asked her to approach him again in the new financial year, when funding for this project may be available.

- **Lammas**

Mr. Dunhill reported that the FRCA had returned a signed copy of the derogation order, which allows the Parish Council to spray the cleavers on the Lammas. This work will have to be completed before the 30th April 2001. The killing of the cleavers will improve the condition of the grass on the Lammas and make it viable again as a hay crop.

Ian Blomeley (Countryside Access Officer) has given Mr. Dunhill the name of a contractor who could carry-out the spraying of the cleavers. Mrs. Davies said that Mr. J. Smith of Old School Orchard has the

Comment [C1]:

licenses and equipment (including a quad bike) to do this work.

Mr. Dunhill to contact both contractors to obtain quotations.

Action: V. Dunhill

Mr. Dunhill has asked the Countryside Stewardship agreement to be amended. The changes to the agreement would be for no tree planting this year, but additional planting in 2002.

The additional shrubs required to replace the 2 – 3 metres of hedging that has died, will be purchased and planted in autumn of this year.

This item to be placed on the agenda for the Parish Council meeting in September.

Agenda 9/01

Mrs. Davies said that it is very evident that people are continuing to walk their dogs on the Lammas, in spite of the ban because of the Foot and Mouth outbreak. She said that one of the signs prohibiting access to the Lammas had been torn down. Mr. Poulton said that there is a £5,000 fine for the removal of these signs.

Mrs. Davies then suggested that, because we cannot stop people walking their dogs on the Lammas, we could agree to it being used and install disinfectant trays, at all the entrances to the Lammas to protect against Foot and Mouth.

After discussion it was agreed that we should not do this. Firstly it would create a precedence, and secondly it would be unlikely that we would receive the necessary permission because public rights of way footpaths run across the Lammas and all of these are currently closed to the public.

Mr. Poulton asked Parish Councillors to contact HCC Trading Standards if they see anybody walking on these public rights of way.

- **PPP**

Mr. Dunhill said that he had now received the yearly reports and end of year return forms from the Parish Paths Partnership

Mr. Dunhill to complete and return these forms by the deadline date of 31st April 2001.

Action: V. Dunhill

The stile into the horses field (adjacent to Kimberly) is in a bad state. Mr. Dunhill to contact Ian

Blomeley to arrange for a replacement stile or the installation of a kissing-gate.

Action: V. Dunhill

Mr. Dunhill to present projects for PPP funding for next year at the Parish Council meeting in April.

Action: V. Dunhill

b) Sportsfield

i) Report

Mr. Poulton carried-out the sportsfield report on the 16th March, the result of which is as follows.

- **Sportsfield:**

Condition of grass	Very muddy and wet.
Litter	None, litterbin now has liner.
Dog-waste bin and fouling	None.
Netball posts	Locked to light pole – OK.
General	Good – Drain hole repaired.

- **Children's Playground:**

Condition of surface	Good – Repair in corner by see-saw in hand.
Litter/Litter bin	Empty.
Large swings	Good – New seats on order.
Small swings	Good.
See-Saw	Good – To be inspected further following site visit in May by RoSPA.
Slide	Good – To be inspected further following site visit in May by RoSPA.
Comments	Good, but spraying required around area of safety matting.

- **Community Hall:**

General Condition	Beading ripped-off fire exit door (to sportsfield). Two strips ripped off windows (Broken window already reported).
Litter bin	None.
Car Park	Good – Drain has been cleaned.
General	Good.

- **Multi-Purpose Play Area:**

Surface	Excellent.
Boundary Fencing	One broken fence, but OK to leave.
Tennis nets	One net up, one down.
Litter	None.
General	Good.

Boards on right-hand side have come away from main support, needs re-fixing (12' from entrance)

• **Great Innings Play Area:**

Equipment	Excellent.
Surfaces	Good.
Litter	None.
Dog-waste bin and fouling	None.
Comments	Good.

• **Allotments Area:**

Access	Reasonable for this time of year.
Condition of paths between Allotments	OK.
Condition of Allotments	Good.
Cultivation	
Condition of Allotments not under cultivation	OK.
Litter	None.
Comments	-

• **Culverts on Mill Lane**

Litter and rubbish in and Culverts	Did not enter.
Dog-fouling	None.
Comments	Good.

• **Salt bins**

Perrywood Lane	Good, ¾ full.
Great Innings	One at entrance has salt spilt out.
Station Road	¾ full.
Moorymead Close	¾ full.
Hazeldell	¾ full.
Garages between Glebe & Rectory Lane	Full.

• **Dog-waste bins**

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

General Comments: -

• **Weed killing**

It was agreed to ask Jeff Skidmore to spray the weeds around the play area, Community Hall and car park areas. **Action: J. Allsop**

• **Drain at Community Hall car park**

Mr. Poulton said that while the drain-cleaning team was in the village, he asked them to clean out the drain in the Community Hall car park. This they did.

• **Write to Hertfordshire Constabulary**

A letter to be sent to Hertfordshire Constabulary informing them of the following incidents of vandalism.

Community Hall

The beading strip on the top of the window adjacent to the pavilion fire exit has been ripped off.

Two window air-vents have been ripped off.

Multi-Purpose Play Area (Tennis Courts) at the sportsfield

Several of the kicker boards have been smashed.

George and Dragon Public House

The gate at the top of the George and Dragon car park has been smashed.

Action: J. Allsop

5 Planning

a) Applications

i) 86 Hazeldell

Proposed front porch and pitched roof to existing garage

Mr. Stock said that he had visited the residents of the neighbouring property. Because no objections were raised and the application was in keeping with similar improvements elsewhere in the village, the Clerk wrote to the Planning Department stating that the Parish Council has no comment on this application.

Parish Councillors agreed with the decision.

ii) 88 Hazeldell

Pitched roof to garage

Mr. Stock said that this was an integral part of the application for number 86 and therefore the Clerk wrote to the Planning Department stating that the Parish Council has no comment on this application.

Parish Councillors agreed with the decision.

iii) Glebe Court

Alterations and improvement to existing sheltered housing

Mr. Poulton said that the plans included improvements to the common community areas, installation of a lift to the first floor, the installation of separate heating systems in all flats, and upgrading the kitchens and bathrooms.

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

iv) 34 Lammas Road

Single storey extension to rear

Parish Councillors studied the plans for this application.

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

Mr. Meischke to show the plans to the residents of the neighbouring properties. **Action: J. Meischke**

b) Decisions

None.

6 Correspondence received

a) EHDC – Oak Tree at Great Innings

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter (dated 7th March).

‘Thank you for your letter of 22nd February, I have already inspected this proposed development site and draw your attention to the fact that what you describe as “the second oak tree” is in actual fact a Poplar. These fast growing trees are prone to storm damage and with surface rooting are not really suitable for retention within a small garden. I have therefore advised the Planning Officer, Mr. Hagyard, that the tree could be removed and replaced with a more suitable specimen of small to medium size, which will add to the amenity of the area and be of suitable scale to this housing estate.

Please do not hesitate to contact me further on this matter.’

Mr. Stock said that confusion had been caused because the tree in question had been identified as an Oak tree on the planning application.

b) RoSPA – Sportsfield, School Lane – Slide

This item was discussed under 4 a, Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee - RoSPA – Annual playground inspection (on page 6 of these minutes).

c) Rumball Sedgwick - covenant on sportsfield

Mr. Poulton read out a letter (dated 27th February) from David Lacon of Rumball Sedgwick. The letter confirmed that Mr. Lacon will be recommending to the Diocesan Board of Finance that they consent to our request for the lifting of part of the covenant on the sportsfield.

A letter to be sent to David Lacon at the end of March, asking him about the outcome of the Diocesan Committee meeting held in the third week in March.

Action: J. Allsop

d) HCC – Local speeding

This item to be placed on circulation.

Action: J. Allsop

e) HCC – Wooden footbridge at southern end of village

This item was discussed under 2 b, Review of Actions - Write to HCC Bridges Department re wooden footbridge over River Beane at southern-end of village (on page 1 of these minutes).

f) Mrs. P. Hammond

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter (dated 1st March) from Mrs P. Hammond of 1 Watkins Hall Cottages.

'I would like the Parish Council to discuss the filling in at the lay-by along Clappers Lane, i.e. the road running along the back at the railway, leading to Church Lane.

This road needed that lay-by as a passing point and as a resident of the above cottage for 41 years, I can assure it is far too dangerous to reverse back into the Datchworth Road.

Sine the hedges and ditch were grubbed out by local farmer early 70's this road floods regularly at this lay-by and the water needs somewhere to disperse.

This road is also used as a rat run to avoid school crossing patrols etc. and is extremely but at certain times at day with people driving far too fast.

So I request once again to have the hedges trimmed as you enter from the Station and both sides at lay-by.

Perhaps you might consider the safety aspect of the dog walkers and parents with children who enjoy walking this road to Church Lane.

Also, I am very concerned about the condition of the broken down wooden fence by the Railway Bridge leading to Church Lane.

Teenagers regularly go down under this bridge, with the fence now completely broken down, small children could run onto the railway bank.

Perhaps this could be pointed to the railway as a matter of urgency if you agree with me.'

Mr. Poulton said that a letter had been sent to Mrs. Hammond acknowledge receipt of her letter, and also to Railtrack asking them to repair the broken fence.

Mr. Stock reminded Parish Councillors that the lay-by had been in-filled to stop fly-tipping at this point, (which also tends to attract children onto the railway embankment). Because the site is sufficiently close to the T-junction in Church Lane, Parish Councillors felt that the reinstatement of the bank did not cause a traffic hazard. It was agreed that the in-fill had been done quite well and had not narrowed the road too much.

A letter to be sent to Mrs. Hammond explaining the Parish Council's reasons for the reinstatement of the bank. Also, informing her that we will continue to pursue Railtrack until the broken fence is repaired and will find out who owns the hedges and then ask for them to be cut back.' **Action: N. Poulton/D. Stock**

g) Countryside Management Service – Parish Paths Partnership – Update 2001

A letter (dated 5th March) has been received from The Countryside Management Service about the banning of all public access to Hertfordshire's Public Rights of Way (ProW) network.

The Countryside Management Service also enclosed an additional copy of the yearly reports and end-of-year return forms with their letter. Mr. Dunhill reported on this item earlier in the meeting (refer to item 4 a, Environment Sub-Committee – PPP, on page 7 of these minutes).

h) Hertfordshire Constabulary

Hertfordshire Constabulary have written to thank Mr. Poulton for attending Police meeting on 7th March.

i) HCC – Bus service 384

Mr. Poulton read out our letter (dated 28th February) to the Passenger Transport Unit concerning bus services 383 and 384, and their possible withdrawal. He then read out an HCC reply (dated 8th March), which confirms that a contract for the 384 service had been awarded to a new operator (i.e. London Transit). As a result, Sovereign has withdrawn its 383 service through Watton-at-Stone. HCC is discussing the effect of this with the new operator and are in the process of negotiating a couple of journeys a day between Watton, Tonwell, Ware and Hertford to replace the 383. A copy of both these letters to be placed on circulation.

Action: J. Allsop

j) Sodexo Land Technology – Grass cutting 2001

Sodexo (Land Technology), who took over the grass cutting service from Highground Contracting at the beginning of 2000, has submitted a quotation of £595.68 (plus VAT) for the cutting of the sportsfield grass for the 2001 season. This is an increase of £10.68 (plus VAT) on last year's price. The quotation is on same basis as in previous years (i.e. 20 flexible cuts, plus strimming around the perimeter of the sportsfield).

Mr. Filer proposed that Sodexo's quotation be accepted on condition that they carry-out the work on the same flexible basis as the Parish Council enjoyed last year. Mr. Dunhill seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

k) HCC – The Definitive Map & Statement of Public Rights of Way in Hertfordshire

HCC has sent us two copies of the definitive maps for Watton-at-Stone. The Watton-at-Stone parish covers four map areas.

These maps to be stored at the Community Hall.

l) HCC – Temporary closure of A602 Ware Road, Watton-at-Stone/Sacombe/Bengeo Rural

HCC advised us that there will be a temporary closure of the A602, which comes into operation on or after 18th March.

Mr. Clark said that this work has now been completed.

m)EHDC – Foot and Mouth

EHDC has asked for a list of all organised events that are likely to take place within the EHDC area during the next three months and have sent a form for completion. This will enable them put in place contingency plans for any foot and mouth outbreaks.

The form to be completed giving the contact names and telephone numbers for the Football and Cricket Clubs. **Action: N. Poulton/J. Allsop**

Mr. Poulton said that, as of this evening, there is a suspected case of foot and mouth within the village Watton-at-Stone. Therefore, a five-mile exclusion zone, for the movement of animals, has been set up around Watton-at-Stone. The initial tests carried-out by MAFF have proved negative and the final results are expected in the middle of next week.

7 Reports from other Organisations

• Watton-at-Stone conservation Society

Mr. Stock said that the Conservation Society held its AGM on 15th March. Mr. Stock was unable to attend because he was away at the time.

• Watton-at-Stone Sport & Social Club

Mr. Meischke said that the Football Club is to clean the external cupboard on Saturday and Sunday of this week.

• Watton-at-Stone JMI School

Mr. Poulton reported that it is still hoped that the Abel Smith Estate will agree to the relocation of the recycling site from Watton School to Watton Nursery.

Mr. Poulton to chase and keep the Parish Council informed. **Action: N. Poulton**

Mr. Clark said that parents who drive their children to school are causing problems in the single-lane part of Rectory Lane. The problem could be avoided if the children were dropped off where the road is wider. Because this is potentially very dangerous, he asked if, for safety reasons, a single-lane part of Rectory Lane could be made a no entry zone for cars, except for access to properties in the area.

Mr. Clark to ask the Governors to pursue this matter with the EH Highways Partnership. **Action: C. Clark**

8 Accounts/Correspondence

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash

Receipts

Sale of 1 video
Sale of 3 Parish Maps

5.00
4.50
9.50

Payments

D. Chandler – 2 hours litterpick
Stamps 70 x 27p

8.48
18.90
27.38

Cheques required

Glasdon
Diocesan Board
J. Allsop
HCC
Don Chandler
Watton Nursery

2 metal litter bin lines
Glebe rent for MPPA land
March salary
Footway lighting maintenance charges 1/4/00–31/3/01
8 hours litterpick
9 Berberis shrubs

37.22
90.00
447.80
435.31
33.92
22.50
1066.75

Cheques received

None

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash

Receipts

Floodlighting to 21/02/01	30.00	Payments	
Colin Straker – Main Hall hire	<u>40.00</u>	VAT return	<u>50.86</u>
	<u>90.00</u>		<u>50.86</u>

Cheques required

Mrs. C. Bewley	32 hours work	160.00
Don Chandler	4 hours work	<u>16.96</u>
		<u>176.96</u>

Cheques received

EHDC	Grant towards resurfacing of MPPA	2537.95
Tennis Club	Hire of Main Hall	24.00
Conservation Society	Pavilion hire	<u>7.00</u>
		<u>2568.95</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

• **Litterpick bin**

The building of a shed to store the litterpick bin to be placed on the agenda for the Parish Council meeting in April. **Agenda: 04.01**

• **The meeting closed at 9.30 pm.**

• **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 18th April 2001.**