

A meeting of the Wotton-at-Stone Parish Council was held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 30th May 2001 following the Annual meeting of the Parish Council.

Present:	Mr. N. Poulton (Chariman)	Mr. D. Stock (Vice-Chairman)
	Mr. C. Clark	Mrs. S. Davies
	Mr. V. Dunhill	Mr. D. Filer
	Mr. I. Knight	Mrs. H. McCash
Public:	Mr. E. Riddle	Mr. Jeff Skidmore
	Mrs. Carole Skidmore	Miss Jane Skidmore

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. Dinnin and Mr. Meischke.

2 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 18th April 2001**

The following amendments were made to the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 18th April 2001.

- Page 8, Item 5 a iii, Planning Applications – Whempstead Road

‘After discussion, Mrs. McCash proposed that the Parish Council objects to the above applications for the following reasons.’

Should read:

‘After discussion it was agreed that the Parish Council objects to the above applications for the following reasons.’

and

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

Should read:

‘Mrs. McCash proposed that a letter be sent accordingly. Mr. Knight seconded the motion and all present were in favour.’

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

b) Review of actions

- **Give copy of letter to HCC re School admissions for the year 2002-2003 to Clerk**

This action point has been completed.

- **Chase Care Group Limited re floor cleaning at Community Hall**

This action point has been completed and the work has been done.

- **Instruct Mr. Skidmore to install the two boot-scrapers**

This action point has been completed and the work has been done.

- **Contact Jono Meischke re digital versions of the CMS, HELP and HCC logos**

This action point has been completed.

- **Update Parish Council about relocation of re-cycling site from Watton School**

Mr. Poulton said that the relocation of the re-cycling site to Watton Nursery was progressing slowly.

Mrs. McCash showed concern that when Watton Nursery has its peak business times there would not be enough car-parking spaces available for people wishing to use the re-cycling facilities. Mr. Poulton said that Major Shepherd and EHDC did not anticipate a problem.

Mrs. Davies asked if there would be any restriction on opening times at the new site. Mr. Poulton confirmed that access to the site would be restricted to the opening times of Watton Nursery; which should make the site safer and less prone to vandalism.

Mr. Poulton said that he had prepared a re-cycling leaflet for distribution throughout the village. The leaflet includes the opening and closing times of the new re-cycling site as well as other re-cycling facilities available in East Herts (i.e. shoe re-cycling). This leaflet to be distributed once the re-cycling unit has been relocated.

- **Write to British Telecom re telephone box at Station Road/ Glebe Close**

This action point has been completed.

Mr. Poulton said that the repair work to the telephone box had been carried-out, but vandals had already smashed the glass again.

The Clerk to write to Hertford Police and British Telecom accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Instruct Peter Allsop to carry-out delivery of the Housing Needs Survey**

This action point has been completed.

- **Distribute the Housing Needs Survey in Whempstead**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to EHDC re Local Government re-organisation**

This action point has been completed.

J

- **Write to GBS Estates re Fir trees overhanging Mill Lane**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 6 g, GBS Estates – Fir trees overhanging Mill Lane (on page 9 of these minutes).

- **Draft a letter for discussion to be sent to the Clerk re changes in contract of employment**

Mrs. McCash said that she had not yet had a chance to carry-out this action point and asked for this item to be placed on the next agenda under Budget & Finance Sub-Committee.

Agenda 06.01/B & F

- **Produce statement of the accounts for annual Parish Meeting**

This action point has been completed.

- **Place notice on Parish Council notice board re dates for public inspection of the Parish Council accounts**

This action point has been completed.

- **Send Community Hall accounts to McCash and Hay for audit**

This action point has been completed.

- **Invite PC Ivens to attend Parish Council meeting on the 27th June 2001**

This action point has been completed.

PC Ivens has not responded to the invitation. Mr. Poulton to contact PC Ivens expressing the Parish Council's continuing concerns about the current problems of vandalism, drug taking and speeding traffic in the village, which we wish to discuss with him during the meeting.

Action: N. Poulton

- **Update Parish Council on progress of information board for Watton Green**

This item to be discussed under 4 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Watton Green (on page 5 of these minutes).

- **Accept Cannon Contracts quotation for the spraying of the cleavers on the Lammas**

This action point has been completed.

- **Inform Countryside Access officer about the spraying of the cleavers on the Lammas**

This action point has been completed.

- **Apply for annual funding from PPP**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 4 a, Environment Sub-Committee – PPP (on page 6 of these minutes).

- **Instruct Jeff Skidmore to kill the weeds and clear up the stones around the MPPA**

This action point has been completed and the work has been done.

- **Write to Environment Agency asking them to check the culverts in Mill Lane**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 6 h, Correspondence received - Environment Agency – Culverts in Mill Lane (on page 9 of these minutes).

- **Remove graffiti from dog-waste bin in Church Walk**

Mr. Poulton said that he had tried to remove the graffiti from the dog-waste bin, but because the bin is plastic, traditional solvents cannot be used. He will try to find another method of removing the graffiti.

Action: N. Poulton

- **Write to EHDC re planning application for Dwelling House and Agricultural barn in Whempstead Road**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to Cricket Club re costs involved in having the Diocesan covenant lifted on the sportsfield**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 6 e, Cled Fursland – Cricket Pavilion (on page 9 of these minutes).

- **Write to Rumball Sedgwick re lifting of the Diocesan covenant on the sportsfield**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 6 c, Rumball Sedgwick – Cricket Pavilion (on page 9 of these minutes).

- **Write to Mr. Beavan re opening of public footpaths**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to Railtrack re broken fence at railway bridge in Church Lane**

This action point has been completed.

Mr. Poulton reported that the fence still remains in an un-repaired state. To date, the Route Contact Manger at London North East Railtrack Zone at York has not responded to our letter asking for the fence to be repaired as a matter of urgency.

The Clerk to write to Railtrack again.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Write to Dr. Norden re plans for improving the Watton-at-Stone to Datchworth stretch of the Watton Road**

This action point has been completed.

c) Action points outstanding for more than two months

None.

3 Specific Items

a) Housing-Needs Survey

Mr. Poulton said that over 200 Housing-Needs Surveys had been returned to date (completed forms should be returned to the Parish Council by 31st May 2001). Mr. Poulton said that he would analyse the results of the survey and give his report to the Parish Council at its meeting on the 27th June 2001. **Agenda: 6/01**

b) Grass verges – monthly inspection

Mr. Poulton said that Sodexho had now cut all the EHDC and HCC grass verges.

Sodexho were behind schedule at the start of the grass-cutting season due to the ground being too wet for their machinery. Also, HCC had not issued them with an up-to-date map of the verges they owned. This has now been supplied.

This item to remain on the agenda until the end of the 2001 grass-cutting season.

Agenda: 6/01

c) Reporting of Parish Council issues in Parish Magazine

Parish Councillors expressed their concern about the reporting of the planning application for a barn and dwelling house at Whempstead in the May 2001 issue of the Parish magazine. This article was not written by the Parish Council but by the editor of the Parish magazine (i.e. Mr. Roy Watson of Highfields, Whempstead) who attended the last meeting of the Parish Council. Mr. Watson has a personal interest in the applications because the land in question adjoins his own. In the June 2001 issue of the Parish Magazine, Mr. Watson has, at the request of Mr. Skidmore, written various corrections to his original article.

After discussion, Mr. Poulton proposed that the unapproved minutes of Parish Council monthly meetings be sent to the editor of the Parish Magazine. Mr. Stock seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The risk of errors is very low at this stage (and the Clerk is protected) because Mr. Poulton and Mr. Stock always check the minutes before they are issued to anyone.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

The Clerk said that she would endeavour to get the minutes to all Parish Councillors before they go to the editor of the Parish magazine, i.e. the 16th of each month.

d) Drug taking on sportsfield

Mr. Poulton showed Parish Councillors two pieces of drug taking equipment that were found recently on the sportsfield. This has been reported to Police.

Crisp packets are also being filled with lighter fuel and then sniffed.

Mr. Poulton said that the Police are currently making frequent visits to the Community Hall car park.

Sarah Davies said that the Youth and Community Service would be advertising for the position of a Youth Club leader for the village again. She has also asked them if they could do some outreach work in the village and arrange for their educational drug and sex buses to visit Watton-at-Stone.

e) Litterpicking in village

Mr. Poulton said that Onyx was not awarded the litterpicking contract again this year. This has now been awarded to MRS, who due to a slight hick-up, did not carry-out any work in Watton-at-Stone for the first

two weeks of their contract. However, the litterpicking and bin emptying is now being carried-out satisfactorily.

Parish Councillors to continue to monitor the situation.

f) Heathmount School – Community work for village

Mr. Poulton reported that Health Mount School is sending students into Watton-at-Stone on 18th/19th June to help carry-out tasks within the village.

Mr. Poulton said that he is going to let them litterpick the whole village and asked Parish Councillors to identify any other jobs that could be done. It was agreed not to ask them to do any painting in the village, because this had not been very successful last year.

g) Renewal of licence for temporary access across the land known as the “Old Cottage Site” at Watton Green

Mr. Filer left the meeting while this item was discussed.

Mr. Poulton proposed that the Parish Council renew Mr. Filer’s licence for temporary access across the land known as the “Old Cottage Site” at Watton Green. This access allows him and named members of his family to lead horses across the “Old Cottage Site” to gain entry to the adjoining fields. Mrs. Davies seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Filer to sign the license.

Action: N. Poulton/D. Filer

Mr. Filer returned to the meeting.

h) EHDC meeting on 31st May 2001 on New Constitution

Mr. Poulton said that EHDC had arranged a meeting for 31st May to outline the workings of the new constitution. He invited Parish Councillors to attend the meeting.

Mr. Poulton, Mr. Filer and the Clerk will represent the Parish Council. Mr. Poulton and Mr. Filer to report on the meeting at the Parish Council meeting on 27th June 2001.

Action: N. Poulton/D. Filer

i) Playground equipment

Mrs. Davies said that she had obtained a lot of brochures on play equipment. She said that the unit that most impressed her was a junior one produced by Wicksteed Leisure, because it was also safe for use by younger children. The unit comprises a climbing structure and a slide. Wicksteed Leisure has visited the site and taken measurements. They will be submitting a quotation for siting the unit on the existing area of concrete adjacent to the current play equipment. The quotation will include laying safety-surface below the unit.

Mrs. Davies said that she has also asked them to quote for the removal of the present slide and to make-good the existing safety-surface, plus the installation of a couple of small spring, sit-on, pieces of equipment.

This item to remain on the agenda.

Agenda: 06/01

4 Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

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

- **Annual renewal of Cornhill Insurance Policy**

Mrs. McCash proposed that the Parish Council renews its policy with Cornhill Insurance and increases the cover for dog-waste bins from three to six. Mr. Stock seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

Community Hall Trustees

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

- **General repairs**

Mr. Poulton said that all general repair work at the Community Hall and at the MPPA has been completed.

- **Date for next meeting**

Mr. Poulton asked for the date of the next meeting of the Community Hall Trustees to be changed from Wednesday 6th June to Wednesday 13th June at 7.30 pm. This was agreed. (Subsequently, this had to be changed to the 26th June.)

Recreation & Amenities

In the absence of Mr. Meischke, Mr. Poulton reported on the following items concerning the Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee.

Comment [C1]:

- **Letter from David Jenkins (7 Glebe Close) regarding fence between sportsfield and horses field**

Mr. Poulton read out a letter (dated 19th April) received from David Jenkins. Mr. Jenkins gives reasons (at length) why he feels that the fence does not present a real danger, and he believes that the damage to the fence is due to the users of the sportsfield coming to collect balls that have landed in the horses field. He then requests that the Parish Council directs all future correspondence to Maureen Monk who is the key-holder of the field and (he believes) the leaseholder of this Diocesan land. He also says that the fence will not be repaired until the ground is dry enough to allow vehicle access and that if the ground is waterlogged it may cause the fence posts to work free again.

Mr. Poulton said that he and Mr. Meischke inspected the fence yesterday and no repair work had been carried-out.

The Parish Council felt that the present condition of the barbed-wire fence was a danger to the horses in the field. Not only could they get hurt by the trailing barbed-wire, but they could also get trapped between the barbed-wire and the wooden fencing. Plus, there is the additional problem of them breaking through onto the sportsfield. The lack of a barbed-wire fence at this point is allowing horses to lean against our wooden fence thus causing damage. One of the fence posts has started to lean and there are now three broken rails.

It was agreed to write to Maureen Monk asking her to repair the fence as soon as possible.

Action: D. Filer/J. Allsop

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

The Community Hall Trustees are to carry-out the MPPA & sports equipment in Main Hall - six-monthly check before the start of their meeting in June 2001.

Action: Trustees

- **MPPA**

- **Grant**

Mr. Poulton was happy to report that SQ Environmental Trust has agreed to grant-aid £6,000 towards the MPPA resurfacing project.

As previously agreed, the £6,000 of Parish Council funds loaned to this project will not be returned to our reserves but shall be put towards new play equipment for the sportsfield play area.

- **Surface – painting week after half-term**

Doe Sport expects to apply the colour surface to the MPPA the week after the half-term School holiday.

- **Vandalism**

Vandals have damaged the new surface of the MPPA by lighting a fire. Doe Sport will repair the damaged area for £130.

Mr. Knight said that small pieces of the new surface had been scuffed-out whilst tennis was being played. He agreed that he, or Ian Vosper, would identify the areas concerned so that Doe Sport can arrange for appropriate repairs (under warrantee) whilst repairing the fire-damaged area of the MPPA.

Action: I. Knight

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

Mr. Knight has produced the wording for the replacement notice. Mr. Meischke to arrange to have a new notice board made.

Action: J. Meischke

Environment

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

- **Watton Green**

- Mr. Stock showed Parish Councillors Jono Meischke's first draft of the artwork for the Watton Green information board and asked for comments. After some discussion it was agreed to replace the current illustration of Watton Green with a plan view.

Mr. Stock to inform Jono Meischke accordingly.

Action: D. Stock

- Mr. Stock proposed that due to its current state (i.e. because of the wet weather) Watton Green should be cut and the ditch strimmed within the next two weeks. Mr. Filer seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Michael Stanley to be instructed accordingly.

Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop

- Mr. Stock has been contacted by HELP with regard to our apparent underspend on the Watton Green project. After explaining the situation, HELP has again agreed to let us retain the amount of underspend and asked Mr. Stock to complete a project completion form when the money has been spent.

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

Mr. Stock reported that EH Highways Partnership had now installed the two wooden bollards on either end of the footpath. Parish Councillors agreed that they now considered the scheme to be complete.

- **Lammas**

Mr. Dunhill said that the Cleavers on the Lammas were sprayed about a week ago.

The surface water in the middle of the Lammas, produced by the heavy rainfall during the winter months, has nearly drained away.

The rights of way footpaths have been strimmed.

Mr. Dunhill and the Clerk to confirm the Lammas grass cutting schedule and advise Michael Stanley of the grass cuts required this year. **Action: V. Dunhill/J. Allsop**

- **PPP**

Mr. Dunhill said that he had now applied for PPP funding for next year. This includes mainly hedge cutting and strimming work, and a kissing-gate into the horses field adjacent to Kimberly (provided that authorisation can be obtained for its installation).

b) Sportsfield

i) Report

Mr. Dunhill carried-out the sportsfield report on the 29th May, the result of which is as follows.

- **Sportsfield:**

Condition of grass	Good.
Litter	Minimal.
Dog-waste bin and fouling	In use.
Netball posts	OK.
General	Good for Bank Holiday weekend. Drugs item by Oak tree.

- **Children’s Playground:**

Condition of surface	OK.
Litter/Litter bin	Litter bin ½ full.
Large swings	Seats.
Small swings	OK.
See-Saw	OK.
Slide	OK.
Comments	Some litter. Typical of holidays.

- **Community Hall:**

General Condition	OK.
Litter bin	In use.
Car Park	OK – shrub needs cutting off or will damage wall.
General	Good.

- **Multi-Purpose Play Area:**

Surface	OK.
Boundary Fencing	OK.
Tennis nets	OK.
Litter	Nil.
General	Needs sweeping? Paving stone near “closed gate”.

- **Great Innings Play Area:**

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

- **Allotments Area:**

Access	Good.
Condition of paths between Allotments	Good.
Condition of Allotments	Very good.
Cultivation	
Condition of Allotments not under cultivation	Poor.
Litter	None.
Comments	Those in use very good.

- **Culverts on Mill Lane**

Litter and rubbish in and	None.
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around Culverts
 Dog-fouling New.
 Comments Water still flowing through culvert.

• **Salt bins**

Perrywood Lane 4
 Great Innings 4
 Station Road 4
 Moorymead Close 4
 Hazeldell 4
 Garages between Glebe -
 Closer & Rectory Lane -

• **Dog-waste bins**

Footpath 17 -
 Sportsfield 4
 Church Walk 4
 Walkern Road 4
 Station Road 4
 High Street (by Memorial) 4
 Great Innings 4
 Mill Lane 4

General Comments: -

• **Shrub adjacent to car park wall**

Mr. Poulton said that Jeff Skidmore had used weed killer on this shrub.

5 Planning

a) Applications

i) 24 Rivershill

Two-storey rear and side extension

Mr. Dunhill 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 in Rivershill, 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) 73 Hazeldell

Single-storey front extension to garage with pitched roof over to garage/study/entrance hall

Mr. Stock said that he had visited the residents of the neighbouring properties. Because no objections were raised and the application was in keeping with similar improvements in Hazeldell, 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) 50 Great Innings North

Single-storey conservatory to rear of house

Mrs. Davies said that she had only been able to visit one of the residents of the neighbouring properties, who after consideration did not object to the application.

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**

iv) 18 Lammas Road

Single-storey front extension

Mr. Filer declared a non-pecuniary interest and left the meeting while this application was discussed.

Mr. Poulton said that slight modifications to an application that was granted permission by EHDC on 16th April 1998 had been submitted. If the Parish Council has no objections to the modifications, then EHDC will not ask the applicant to apply again for planning permission, but amend the plans already approved.

Parish Councillors studied the amended plan and after discussion it was agreed that the Parish Council has no objections to the modifications.

The Clerk to inform EHDC accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Filer returned to the meeting.

v) Whempstead Road

Agricultural Barn – Amended plans

This item to be discussed with the following application.

vi) Whempstead Road

Dwelling house – Amended plans

Mr. Clark again declared a pecuniary interest in these plans because Mr. Skidmore, the applicant, employed his son on a part-time basis.

Parish Councillors studied the amended plans for both applications and compared them with those originally submitted. The original plans were not to scale and showed the buildings taking up a larger proportion of the site than they would in reality.

Mr. Poulton gave a brief recap of Mr. Skidmore's application to build an agricultural barn and dwelling house on land in Whempstead Road.

At the Parish Council meeting on 18th April 2001, three residents of Whempstead attended the meeting to put forward their objections to the application. They also had submitted written objections together with those of three other residents (making a total of six letters of objection received). Mr. Poulton has now also received, via Mr. Skidmore, eight letters in support of his application. The Parish Council had objected to the original application for the following reasons.

1. The proposed buildings would have a detrimental visual impact on the surrounding area and are not in keeping with the existing environment.
2. The proposed buildings are inappropriate for the site.
3. The site is on a narrow bend in the highway where visibility is poor.
4. The proposed bed and breakfast business, together with vehicles/machinery garaged in the barn etc., would increase traffic movement in the area (which has experienced traffic problems in the past)
5. In light of the ADAS report, there is a question as to whether or not the applicant is involved in agriculture and therefore if an agricultural tie should be applied to the site.

Mr. Poulton said that two of these items are no longer valid, i.e. the entrance to the site is on a straight section of the road, and Mr. Skidmore has been proved to be an agricultural contractor and therefore an agricultural tie to the site would be applicable.

The meeting was closed at 8.40 pm to allow public discussion.

The meeting opened again at 9.05 pm.

Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Skidmore left the meeting at 9.05 p.m.

Mr. Clark left the meeting so that Parish Councillors could debate the subject.

After much discussion, it was agreed that we write to EHDC stating that the Parish Council wishes to withdraw its letter of the 19th April 2001 concerning the original applications, and make the following comments on the amended applications.

1. The proposed use of the site is not in keeping with the existing environment.
2. The proposed bed and breakfast business, together with vehicles/machinery garaged in the barn etc., would increase traffic movement in the area (which has experienced traffic problems in the past).

Mrs. Davies proposed that a letter be sent accordingly. Mr. Filer seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Clark returned to the meeting.

b) Decisions

i) 88 Hazeldell

Pitched roof to garage

-EHDC permission granted

ii) 34 Lammas Road

Single storey extension to rear

-EHDC permission granted

iii) Cricket Ground

Tractor store

-EHDC permission granted

iv) Glebe Court

Alterations and improvements to existing sheltered housing scheme

-EHDC permission granted

6 Correspondence received

a) Jeff Skidmore – Application for planning permission at Whempstead

All Parish Councillors were given a copy of Jeff Skidmore's letters of the 2nd May (to Mr. Watson) and 12th May (to the Parish Council) prior to the meeting.

Mr. Skidmore's application for planning permission was discussed under item 5 a, Planning Applications – iv and v (pages and 8 of these minutes). Parish Councillors had no comments to make on these letters.

b) MAFF – Derogation order

MAFF has returned a signed copy of the new derogation order, which allows the Parish Council to spray the cleavers on the Lammas. The new order requires the work to be completed before the 21st May 2001.

A new order was required because the ground was too wet for spraying before the end of April.

c) Rumball Sedgwick – Cricket Pavilion

Mr. Poulton read out a letter (dated 9th May) from Rumball Sedgwick regarding the lifting of the covenant on the sportsfield.

d) The Church of England Legal Office – Variation of covenant affecting former Glebe Lane

Mr. Poulton read out a letter (dated 18th May) from the Church of England Legal Office informing us that they have received instructions with respect to a Deed of Release of covenant on the sportsfield.

e) Cled Fursland – Cricket Pavilion

Mr. Poulton read out a letter (dated 28th April) from Cled Fursland in which he agrees to pay the £100 for the lifting of the covenant on the sportsfield, and all reasonable associated costs that may arise.

f) Groundwork Hertfordshire – Landfill Tax Credit Scheme

Mr. Poulton read out a letter (dated 3rd May) from Gill Taylor of Groundwork Hertfordshire. She informs us that the Chancellor's latest Budget Statement indicates that the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme is under review and that, in the future, this valuable resource might be used mainly, or even totally, to fund schemes in support of the Government's recycling targets. Groundwork recognises the importance of waste minimisation and strongly supports aims to re-use and recycle. However, the proposals being made represent a serious threat to those locally-based physical improvement projects which are currently eligible to benefit.

If we agree with Groundwork's views, Gill Taylor has asked the Parish Council to write to Michael Meacher MP (Minister for the Environment) and our local MP pointing out the importance of the Landfill Credit Scheme and the benefit which it has had for the environment and community.

Mr. Poulton proposed that the Parish Council write to Michael Meacher MP and our local MP accordingly.

Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: J. Allsop

g) GBS Estates – Fir trees overhanging Mill Lane

Mr. Poulton read out a letter (dated 3rd May) from GBS Estates in response to our letter requesting that the fir trees now be cut back.

'We acknowledge your letter of April 27.

The work proposed has now been better defined. It involves the removal of every second Leylandii and the trimming back to twelve feet approximately high of the remainder and their curtailment from overhanging public spaces. This is in the interests of good husbandry, the wishes of the residents at Willowdene and the protection of the retaining wall which will not withstand the pressure from further root growth. The spaces created will later be filled with Common and Portuguese Laurel.

In addition similar treatment and for similar reasons will be administered to the large Whitebeam etc. causing the cracking of the retaining wall by the lay-by, being replaced by less vigorous shrubs as opposed to standards.

If you would be so good as to clear such of these matters as require consents, then we can schedule in the tree surgery team.'

A copy of GBS's letter to be sent to Liz Greenwood (Landscape Officer at EHDC) asking her to confirm in writing her consent or refusal to the proposed tree works at Willowdene.

Action: J. Allsop

h) Environment Agency – Culverts in Mill Lane

Mr. Poulton read out a letter (dated 16th May) from the Environment Agency stating that the responsibility for maintaining the culverts under Mill Lane rests with the riparian owner, who they believe are EH Highways Partnership

It was agreed to send a copy of this letter to Ron Jack at EH Highways Partnership.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

i) The Royal British Legion – 80th Anniversary

The Royal British Legion has written requesting a donation. Mr. Poulton reminded Parish Councillors that it is not our policy to send donations to charities. However, Parish Councillors could do this as individuals if they so wished.

It was agreed to write to the Royal British Legion informing them of the Parish Council's policy and informing them that we already donate £50 to the Poppy fund in October each year.

Action: J. Allsop

j) Robert Adams – Ferreting

Mr. Poulton read out a letter from Mr. R. Adams, of 4 Glebe Close (dated 9th May 2001), in which he thanked the Parish Council for the licences to ferret from September 2000 to March 2001.

Mr. Stock proposed that, because there had been no problems during the last season, we renew the licences for Mr. Adams to ferret Watton Green, the allotments, the Lammas and the paddock at the far end of the Lammas (this land is owned by the Abel Smith Estate). This was agreed.

Mr. Stock to arrange to sign the licenses with Mr. Adams.

Action: D. Stock

k) EH Highways Partnership - Bollards in School Lane

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter from Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership), dated 21st May, to Mr. and Mrs. Collin of 7 Rectory Lane.

'With reference to your letter and our subsequent site meeting to discuss the re-siting of bollards.

I can now confirm that the Highways Authority will resite the bollards. After discussion with the previous Parish Engineer and my Manager it appears that it would be very difficult to argue in law to prevent access to your property from this land.

I would be grateful if you would contact me when you are ready to proceed with your proposals for your accessway.'

Mr. Poulton said that the bollards in School Lane had already been re-sited to allow vehicle access to the garage at the rear of 7 Rectory Lane, adjacent to the Beeches. The owners, Mr. and Mrs. Collins, obtained legal advice re the moving of the bollards and EH Partnership were left with no alternative but to re-site them. Mr. Poulton said that the Parish Council's decision not to object to the outline planning application for a building on the Play School site (between the Beeches and 10 School Lane) weakened any case for retaining the bollards in their previous position.

l) EHDC - Election of Chairman of a Town/Parish Council

Mr. Poulton said that EHDC wrote to us on 23rd May to remind the Parish Council that the Chairman must be elected annually from among the Councillors and the election must be the first business transacted at the Parish Council's annual meeting. Anyone elected to the office of Chairman cannot act in that office until they have made a declaration of acceptance of office. The penultimate paragraph states:

'It should be noted that if a Parish/Town Council fails to elect a Chairman then the Council is not properly constituted. Any business carried out before the election of the Chairman is void. Therefore, the Council cannot function without the election of a Chairman.'

The Watton-at-Stone Parish Council adhered to the rules when electing the Chairman at their Annual Parish Meeting prior to this meeting.

m)MAFF – Issue of an New Agricultural Holding Number

MAFF has written to inform us that our agricultural holding number of 18/129/9203 has been changed and updated to the new holding number of 18/129/0052.

7 Reports from other Organisations

• Watton-at-Stone JMI School

Mr. Clark reported on the following items concerning Watton JMI School.

- Mr. Cantes remains on sick leave.
- All items highlighted in the OFSTED report have been addressed and the School is ready for an interim visit from the HM Inspectors of Schools.
- The Governors are holding a workshop in June to develop a strategic direction for the School. All stakeholders have been invited to attend, including the Parish Council. Mr. Clark said he would be suggesting that the strategic direction should include topics to develop the children's sense of community and respect for the environment. He also requested that if the Parish Councillors wished to add any thoughts or comments that they should contact him. The acting Head Teacher is

particularly interested in the School developing a capability to maintain contact with the children after they transfer to secondary education.

Mr. Poulton asked if the School could trim the boundary of its field adjacent to Glebe Close because neighbouring residents are complaining about the weed encroachment and health problems associated with pollen from grass and weed seeds. Also, that the hedge that runs at the back of the School (from Glebe Close to the Old Rectory) needs cutting back.

Mr. Clark to notify the School accordingly.

Action: C. Clark

• **Watton-at-Stone Scout and Guide Group**

Mr. Dunhill said that he had spoken to Peter Knight (at Hertfordshire Scouts). Watton-at-Stone Scout and Guide Group is still without a Group Leader. Scout attendance in East Hertfordshire has been in decline, but they are trying to recruit new members.

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

In the absence of Mr. Meischke, Mr. Knight reported that the recent meeting of the Sports & Social Club had been very useful. Their next meeting will take place on 4th July 2001 in the Community Hall.

Mr. Knight said that visiting teams often had difficulty finding the sportsfield and Community Hall because there are no appropriate signs on the High Street. This also causes problems for emergency services called to the site.

It was agreed to write to Ron Jack (EH highways Partnership) asking him to install signs pointing towards the "Community Hall and Sportsfield".

Action: J. Allsop

8 Accounts/Correspondence

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash

Receipts

Sale of 17 Parish Maps

25.50

25.50

Payments

None

Cheques required

Cornhill Insurance	Annual premium	810.97
Peter Allsop	For distributing housing survey	25.00
Morris Gordon	Footpath signs	119.37
Don Chandler	24 hours litterpicking	120.00
HCC	Lighting	372.66
J. Allsop	May salary	473.20
		<u>1921.20</u>

Cheques received

None

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash

Receipts

Floodlighting to 05/01

30.00

Cricket Club – Main Hall hire

28.00

Colin Straker – Main Hall hire

56.00

114.00

Payments

Duplicate book 2.29

Eastern Energy 175.28

177.57

Cheques required

Care Group Ltd	Floor cleaning	325.48
Don Chandler	8 hours	40.00
Mrs. C. Bewley	32 hours work	<u>168.00</u>
		<u>533.48</u>

Cheques received

Georgina Pay	Hire of Main Hall	138.60
Mrs. Bell	Pavilion hire	56.00
Mr. Lewis	Pavilion and changing room hire	78.00
Sports & Social Club	Half year hire of Community Hall facilities	450.00
Sports & Social Club	Donation towards extra keys for Community Hall	<u>28.15</u>
		<u>750.75</u>

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

9 Chairman's / Clerk's Report

None.

- **The meeting closed at 9.53 pm.**

- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 27th June 2001.**