

**A meeting of the Wotton-at-Stone Parish Council was held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2002 at at 7.15 pm**

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

Members of Public: Mr. Riddle

## 1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Clark, Mr. Dunhill, Mrs. McCash and Mrs. Davies.

## 2 Minutes of the last meeting

### a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2002**

The following amendment was made to the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2002.

- Page 8, final bullet-point.
- 'The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2002'

should read:

'The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2002'

Mrs. Dinnin 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

- **Sign a copy of the declaration of acceptance of office**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to village organisations re name of the Parish Council representative assigned to them**

This action point has been completed.

- **Give all Parish Councillors a copy of the amended standing orders**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to Tilly Andrews (EHDC) re Summer Play Scheme**

This action point has been completed.

- **On receipt, present the Countryside Management Service report on the land at the rear of Rivershill**

Mr. Stock read out Mr. Dunhill's report on this item.

'Still waiting feedback from CMS. Have been and had a look. Very overgrown with nettles and brambles. Might be OK just to cut back brambles/encroaching scrub every 2 to 3 years. In any case would recommend at least an annual inspection to ensure that nothing untoward is happening.'

- **Copy all Parish Councillors present at the May meeting with draft letter to Mr. Watson**

This action point has been completed.

Mr. Filer said that all Parish Councillors present or not at a meeting should have been copied with this item.

After some discussion, it was agreed that in future our policy will be to copy all Parish Councillors with draft letters that require comments/approval.

- **Send letter to Mr. Watson**

This action point has been completed.

- **Ask HCC to install two off-set bollards in place of the barrier on footpath leading to Church Lane**

The bollards are on order by HCC Rights of Way Officer.

This item to be placed on the agenda under Environment Sub-Committee until it has been resolved.

**Agenda: Env**

- **Visit the Clerk to update the virus detector and resolve some problems associated with the e-mail software**

Mr. Dunhill visited the Clerk's home and upgraded Outlook Express from version 5 to version 6. He also felt that we should subscribe to a virus detector.

The Clerk said that after Mr. Dunhill's visit, she had downloaded free Norton Antivirus software.

After discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council subscribe to Norton Antivirus to protect the computer. The Clerk to update Norton Antivirus on a weekly basis as well as backing-up all files.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Clark has told the Clerk that he is still happy to resolve the e-mail problem during a weekend.

- **E-mail Mr. Clark re outstanding action points**

This action point has been completed.

- **E-mail Mr. Meischke re outstanding action point**

This action point has been completed.

- **Sign a copy of the written undertaking re Code of Conduct**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to Cllr Carver (EHDC) re Code of Conduct**

This action point has been completed.

- **Identify any footpath problem areas to Mr. Stock**

Mr. Stock said that Mrs. Davies was the only Parish Councillor to contact him re footpath problems in the village. Mr. Stock said that he had had a site meeting with Mrs Davies to discuss problems with the stretch of footpath between the entrance to Motts Close and the Long Meadow development.

- **Write to Ron Jack re footpath problem areas**

Mr. Stock said that he had written to Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership) informing him about the problems with the footpaths in Hazeldell and the footpath between Motts Close and Longmeadow development. In the letter, he requested a meeting between Mr. Jack, Mrs. Davies and himself.

This item to remain on the agenda under Environment Sub-Committee.

**Agenda: 7.02**

- **Meet on-site with the Countryside Management Service to discuss need for any tree surgery on the Lammas**

Mr. Stock said that Mr. Dunhill had not yet arranged a meeting with the Countryside Management Service.

**Action: V. Dunhill**

However, Mr. Dunhill had trimmed-back the low branch across the Lammas footpath near the Walkern Road end.

- **Try and obtain funding for work to riverside footpath from our Stewardship Agreement**

Mr. Stock read out Mr. Dunhill's report.

'Funding from DEFRA: Need to get a better idea of what we need to do (previous AP) before approaching DEFRA. For info: Agreement with DEFRA is for 10 years. In the first 5 years there is a capital programme - tree planting etc. - which is agreed upfront and ends this year.'

**Action: V. Dunhill**

- **Send Don Chandler a Get Well card**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to EHDC re two planning applications for Lane Croft, Perrywood Lane**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to EHDC re planning application for Blue Bury Farm, Walkern Road**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to EHDC re planning application for 18 Lammas Road**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to EHDC re planning application for Gregory's Buildings, Hogswood Lane, off Mill Lane**

This action point has been completed.

- **Visit neighbours of 29 High Street to ascertain their views on the above application**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to EHDC re planning application for 29 High Street**

This action point has been completed.

- **Issue Mr Winsor with a license to ferret (not shoot) in the wooded area to the west of the Brambles**

This item to be discussed under 4 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Renewal of Licences (on page 7 of these minutes).

- **Give the Conservation Society information on EHDC LEAF fund**

This action point has been completed.

- **Inform the Conservation Society that in principle the Parish Council would give funding towards their Golden Jubilee project to update the Village Guide**

This action point has been completed.

### c) Action points outstanding for more than two months

- **Send Community Hall accounts to McCash and Hay for audit**  
This action point is outstanding. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Check the replacement values of various items on the Parish Council insurance policy**  
This item to be discussed under 4 a, Budget & Finance Sub-Committee (on pages 4 and 5 of these minutes).
- **Look at values of items on Community Hall insurance policy**  
This item to be discussed under 4 a, Budget & Finance Sub-Committee (on page 4 of these minutes).
- **Accept Mr. Bunyan's quotation re work to manhole covers and two gable ends of the Community Hall**  
This action point has been completed.  
Refer to item 4 a Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee - Manhole cover in sportsfield (on page 6 of these minutes).
- **Give Mr. Stock updated version of Community Hall hire agreement**  
This action point has been completed. Changes to the agreement have now been completed.
- **Draft the Parish Council's responses to HCC's documents concerning schooling and school transportation**  
Mr. Poulton read out Mr. Clark's report.  
'Re the School Transport Consultation. Unfortunately I missed the dead-line date to get a response back although there wasn't anything contentious in it. However I am aware that it is the policy of the Parish Council to always make a response where possible so my apologies to the other Councillors for this oversight.'
- **Ask the School to contact EHDC's dog-warden (Mike Abbey) direct re dog-fouling problems**  
Mr. Poulton read out Mr. Clark's report.  
'I have asked the Governors of the School to contact the Dog Warden directly. Can you let me have a note of a contact number for my own use please.'  
The Clerk to give Mr. Clark Mike Abbey's telephone number. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Prepare instructions on how to use the lock to the external door adjacent to the car park**  
This action point has been completed.
- **On completion of the above action point enclose these instructions with the Community Hall hire agreement**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Draft a letter to be sent to all allotment holders concerning the compost bins**  
This action point has been completed.

## 3 Specific Items

### a) Ornate Village sign

Because the Parish Council is not comfortable with original design and the potential cost of the ornate sign, Mr. Stock, Mrs. Dinnin and Mrs. McCash (i.e. the working group) had met to discuss an alternative that could be achieved within or close to our budget. Mrs. Dinnin had obtained leaflets on signs from various sources. The style and price of signs vary greatly.

After showing Parish Councillors examples of different styles of signs, Mr. stock said that the working group recommends that we proceed with a much simpler design carved in Oak. He then showed Parish Councillors a hand-drawn example of a design to illustrate the idea.

Mr. Stock said that because of the subjective nature of the task, we must agree on a general concept /design at this stage to avoid wasted effort and expenditure.

After much discussion, it was agreed that the design components shall comprise (in simplified /stylised form) : the churches, War Memorial, pump, river and the bridges at either end of the village. For the sake of simplicity not all of these components will appear in the final design. However, the village logo will appear on both sides of the sign.

Mrs. Dinnin said that Mr. Glyn Mould (who lives in Peterborough) produces the type of sign that we are proposing and suggested that we should visit him to discuss our design further and get an idea of the costs involved.

It was agreed that a small group of Parish Councillors visit Mr. Mould and take photographs of the Churches, War Memorial etc with them. **Action: Working group**

## b) Parish News

Mr. Poulton said that after much deliberating on the subject he and Mr. Stock felt that the Parish Council minutes should no longer be given to the Parish News to extract articles from. This would avoid any misinterpretations etc. The Reverend Manley-Cooper agrees with this view.

After discussion, it was agreed that at the end of each meeting the Parish Council should decide what (if any) items it wanted to be published in the Parish News. The Clerk will then send the appropriate text to the editor of the Parish News.

### Report on Hertfordshire Constabulary meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2002

Mr. Filer reported that he had attended the Hertfordshire Constabulary 'Members Evening' on 23<sup>rd</sup> May to listen to a series of presentations made by senior officers and to take part in the subsequent question and answer session.

He reported that Superintendent Gary Kitching opened the evening by explaining the police command structure and stating that the police had two 'strategic drives'.

- Engaging crime and criminality.
- Protecting and reassuring the public.

In doing this they employed five key principles, namely:

- intelligence led problem solving
- visibility recognition and intervention
- clear lines of accountability and ownership
- allows demand management
- underpinned by rigorous performance management.

Superintendent Kitching went on to say that the police were trying to arrest people further up the criminal chain and not just the 'foot soldiers'.

Other presentations were made by Chief Inspector Adrian Walker and Superintendent Andy Murphy who explained the operation of the Area Crime Group.

A number of other presentations took place and Mr. Filer commented that although it was a good informative evening there were too many presentations, which took too long.

One of the surprising comments was that there was no shortage of police recruits at present. They had the maximum numbers that they could train – the training organisation was full!

## 4 Reports

### a) Sub-Committees

#### Budget & Finance

Mr. Filer reported on the following items concerning the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee.

- **Community Hall insurance policy**

Mr. Filer said that he and the Clerk had visited the Community Hall to check its contents and put a value on each item.

After discussion on the subject, it was agreed to increase the cover on section 2, item 1 of the policy - Machinery and all other contents excluding items 2 – 7, from £4,616 to £8,000. **Action: J. Allsop**

The Clerk to find out how much it would cost the Community Hall to be covered for:

- loss of income
- land subsidence.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Parish Council insurance policy**

Mr. Filer said that he and the Clerk had reviewed all the items on the Parish Council insurance policy and as result:

- the new bike ramps have now been included on the policy
- the values of the existing play equipment have been checked with Wicksteed Leisure and Cornhill Insurance has been notified of the amended values
- the old Parish Council computer (which is being housed in the Community Hall loft) has been removed from the policy
- the Epson LQ100 printer has been removed from the policy (this item is still housed at the Clerk's house as an emergency back-up printer).

The items which still require an updated value are:

- the seats within the village
- the gates and fences – this item includes the brick wall at the Community Hall car park (Mr. Poulton said that Nick Whitehead will produce a quotation for the replacement of this wall using old London stock bricks)
- the mower, strimmer and leaf collector.

If the values of the items listed above are different to the present insurance cover, then Cornhill Insurance to be notified accordingly. **Action: D. Filer/J. Allsop**

Mr. Knight confirmed that the replacement values of the netball posts, 2 sets of tennis posts and 2 nets were correct.

### Community Hall Trustees

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

- **Report and acceptance of minutes of meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2002**

Mr. Stock proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed as a true record. Mr. Meischke seconded the motion and Mr. Poulton and Mr. Knight were in favour.

- **Floodlighting at MPPA**

Mr. Meischke said that he had contacted Websters and they have now replaced the broken floodlight. During a recent conversation with them, Mr. Meischke said that the Parish Council would be expecting a discount for loss of income due to the lights not working for over six months. Websters have not yet invoiced us for the work.

- **MPPA surface**

Mr. Knight said that he believed that Doe Sport had now repaired the holes. Mr. Poulton and Mrs. Dinnin also said that the holes appear to have been repaired.

Mr. Knight agreed to inspect the surface and report back.

**Action: I. Knight**

If Mr. Foster (of Doe Sport) does not charge for the repair work, a letter of thanks will be sent to him.

**Action: I. Knight/J. Allsop**

Doe Sport will give us pots of the light and dark-green paint to conceal the repair work. Mr. Knight to chase.

**Action: I. Knight**

- **Litter picking and opening and closing of toilets**

Mr. Poulton said that Don Chandler has decided that, because of his recent illness, he no longer wishes to continue working for the Parish Council.

Mr. Poulton said had now appointed Mr. Ted Brown of 112 High Street to carry-out 4 hours litterpicking duties per week at £5.25 per hour. The duties are as follows.

**Wednesday:**

- Leave litterbin out by Community Hall for refuse to be collected and return to your property when empty.

**Weekly:**

- Empty six litterbins as and when full and litter pick sportsfield. Place all rubbish in plastic sacks and put in litterbin at your house.
- Empty two litterbins as and when full at top of Hockerill slope and top of George and Dragon car park.
- Litterpick from the top of Hockerill slope to the Community Hall.
- Litterpick from the school to the Community Hall.
- Litterpick School Lane from 112 High Street to 94 High Street.
- Litterpick Church Walk.

All materials to be supplied by the Parish Council. Time sheets required.

Mr. Brown has agreed to store the litterpick bin at his home.

Mr. Poulton said he had appointed Mrs. K. Harris, of 135 High Street, to carry-out the following duties at the Community Hall.

**Daily:**

Open outside toilets at 9 a.m. and close at 3 p.m.

**Monday & Tuesday:**

- Open main doors at 9 a.m. and close at 3 p.m.

These duties exclude weekends and school holidays

The rate of pay is £5.25 per hour and the time allocated to the above duties is 1 hour per week.

Comment [C1]:

- **Main Hall flooring**

The Main Hall flooring was inspected during the Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2002. No faults were found.

### Recreation & Amenities

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

- **Report on meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2002**

- **Weekly inspection of MPPA, Playground, Bike Ramps and Community Hall**

Mr. Meischke handed out copies of the weekly-inspection-sheet prepared by the Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee. (A copy of the report is attached to these minutes.) **See attached**

All present agreed that the Parish Council should adopt the weekly inspection sheet.

It was agreed that the Clerk shall carry-out this weekly duty and be paid accordingly, except during the week that Parish Councillors carry-out their monthly report.

Mr. Meischke agreed to carry-out any weekly inspections that the Clerk is unable to do during the school summer holidays, and the monthly inspections in August. **Action: J. Meischke**

- **Monthly inspection sheet for Playground equipment, Play Area and Allotments and any other areas of concern**

The Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee reviewed the monthly inspection sheet and made some minor alterations, and added the bike ramps.

- **Six-Monthly inspection**

Mr. Meischke said that in addition to the six-monthly checks of the MPPA and Community Hall, he had prepared an inspection sheet for the Play Area on the sportsfield.

It was agreed that all Parish Councillors be given a copy of the six-monthly checks for discussion during its July meeting. **Action: J. Allsop**

This item to be placed on the agenda for the July Parish Council meeting. **Agenda 07/02**

- **Cricket Club – Locking and condition of Community Hall after use**

Mr. Meischke said that there had been a problem with the Cricket Club leaving the Community Hall in a dirty state and failing to lock the building after use. He proposed that a letter be sent to the Sports and Social Club informing them that the Cricket Club has:

- failed to lock the external and internal doors when leaving the building
- left food and drink residue in the kitchen, causing an ant infestation
- left lights on
- left the blinds in the Pavilion open.

In addition to this, equipment is being left in both of the changing rooms thus preventing the cleaner from carrying out her duties and causing a nuisance to other users. Also, the Parish Council must point out that no responsibility can be accepted if any of this equipment goes missing.

Mr. Poulton seconded the motion and all present were in favour. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Cricket Club – attitude towards Bike Ramps**

Mr. Meischke said that the Cricket Club have been telling youngsters that they are not allowed to use the bike ramps during the cricket season. Consequently, the bike ramps are now idle because the youngsters feel that they should not be using them. Mr. Meischke proposed that another letter be sent to the Sports and Social Club informing them of the situation and telling them that the bike ramps were installed as part of a police/Parish Council initiative to try and give the youngsters of the village something to do and avoid a repeat of last year's vandalism during the summer holidays. However, we do understand that the Cricket Club may have a problem. We would be happy if the youngsters were approached in the correct manner, e.g. explain to them why using the ramps gives cricket players a problem and then ask them to avoid using the ramps during a match.

Also, reminding them that the sportsfield is a public amenity and is therefore available to all individuals and not solely for a specific club. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Post and Rail fence**

Mr. Filer said that he visited the sportsfield while the post-and-rail fence was being installed and was impressed with the quality of Mr. Whitehead's work.

- **Manhole cover in sportsfield**

The manhole cover has now been repaired by Mr. Bunyan.

## Environment

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

- **Byelaws – Watton Green and the Lammas**

The draft byelaws have been returned to us for further work. Mr. Stock said that because we are applying for new byelaws, the procedure is more complex than when we modified the byelaws for the sports field.

Also, the model byelaws have been changed by the government. And we have to provide substantial justification for the acceptance and implementation of the byelaws that we want to adopt. Mr. Stock and Mr. Poulton had met to discuss this subject in detail.

Mr. Stock has completed the appropriate forms and the Clerk has incorporated the changes required to the byelaws. We have re-submitted the whole package for approval by the Department of Transport (Local Government and the Regions).

- **Watton Green**

- **Barrier/hand-rail**

The barrier/hand-rail has been stolen from the Brambles-end of Watton Green. This has been reported to the police.

Mr. Stock purchased timber for a replacement barrier/hand-rail, which he and Mr. Poulton then installed. The price of the timber was £8.85.

- **Grass cut**

The grass cuts for Watton Green and the Lammas are due during the first week of July and the first week of September.

The clerk has contacted Mr. Stanley who confirmed that the price for all of the cuts will be the same as before, i.e. £800 in total. The price for the ditch strim at Watton Green will also be as before, i.e. 2 x £70.

Mr. Stock proposed that we instruct Mr. Stanley to strim the ditch at Watton Green, and cut Watton Green and the Lammas accordingly. Mr. Filer seconded the proposal and all present were in favour.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Ferreting**

Mr. R. Adams wrote to Mr. Stock to inform him that during the 2001-2002 he had caught:

- 56 rabbits and 3 rats on the Lammas and the paddock
- 22 rabbits on Watton Green
- 19 rabbits on the allotments.

In his letter, Mr. Adams suggested that, because we had issued additional licences to other people to ferret, we felt that his services were not adequate. Mr. Stock wrote to Mr. Adams to explain the situation with regard to the Lammas and to assure him that his efforts are much appreciated by the Parish Council.

- **Renewal of Licences**

Mr. Stock said that he had become unhappy with the way in which we issue licences, i.e. at different times and for different periods.

To improve the situation, and to ensure that renewal dates are not missed in the future, he has made the following changes.

- All licences (i.e. licences to ferret and the licence for temporary access across the land known as the 'old cottage site' at Watton Green) are valid for 1 year.
- All licences expire on 30<sup>th</sup> April.
- The renewal of all licences to appear on the agenda for the Parish Council meeting in April of every year.
- Mr. Stock then confirmed that he had issued new licences to Mr. D. Filer (re temporary access across the land known as the 'old cottage site' at Watton Green), Mr. Adams and Mr. S. Winser (both for ferreting). The licence for Mr. S. Alsford (to ferret the Lammas and the paddock) will be reviewed in November.

All present were happy with the changes made by Mr. Stock and the licences being renewed.

In response to a question by Mr. Filer, Mr. Stock confirmed that none of our 'licences to ferret' allow the use of guns on land owned by the Parish Council. This is for reasons of safety.

- **Trees**

Mr. Stock said that he and the Clerk had noted that dead trees in Hazeldell and Walkern Road needed replacing. The Clerk has informed Mr. Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership) and Ms Liz Greenwood (Landscape Officer at EHDC) accordingly.

He then asked councillors to let the Clerk know if there are any other trees that are dead or in a very poor condition so that she can arrange for them to be replaced. **Action: All Parish Councillors**

Mr. Filer believed that some of the trees on Watton Green were dead. Mr. Filer and Mr. Stock to meet on-site to examine the trees. **Action: D. Stock/D. Filer**

- **Condition of footpaths in Hazeldell**

Mr. Stock has walked the footpaths in Hazeldell to identify problem areas. He also met with Mrs. Davies to discuss the state of the footpath from the entrance to Motts Close towards the Longmeadow development.

As a result, he has written a letter to Mr. Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership) requesting a site meeting with himself and Mrs. Davies to discuss the problems in detail.

- **The Bull footpath**

The footpath that runs from the back of the Bull Public House garden to Rivershill is currently in a very slippery state. Mr. Meischke (who has recently moved his home to Rivershill) said that he believes that in the deeds for his property there is a reference to the footpath and who is responsible for it.

The Clerk said that when she first became Clerk over nine years ago, the Parish Council had tried to get this path included on the definitive rights of way map. However, HCC had said that they would require the permission of the brewery that owns the Bull Public House before the matter could proceed. The brewery never responded to our letters and the Parish Council dropped the matter.

It was agreed that in the first instance Mr. Meischke is to look at his deeds and report back to the Parish Council accordingly. **Action: J. Meischke**

- **Rabbit fencing on Allotments and the Lammas**

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter (dated 22<sup>nd</sup> May) from Mr. Abel Smith.

‘I refer to your letter dated the 18<sup>th</sup> April concerning rabbits on the Lammas.

In my opinion, there is little to be gained by installing a rabbit proof fence along the boundary that you suggest in your letter. This would be expensive and it does not stop the rabbits from migrating around the ends of the fences. Money would be better spent, in my view, in cutting off the problem at its root cause by controlling the rabbits properly. This should be accompanied by a programme of eliminating the habitat for rabbits e.g. all the piles of weed, brushwood and groups of nettles and elders, all combined, create a harbour for rabbits and it is very difficult if not impossible to control them when they are able to conceal themselves in such areas.

I suggest that serious consideration be given to this letter.’

Mr. Poulton said that he met on-site with Michael Stanley and Jeff Skidmore who have both provided quotations for the clearance work on the Lammas bank as follows.

Michael Stanley	£5,000
Jeff Skidmore	£3,000 plus VAT

Mr. Poulton then read out the following letter (dated 6<sup>th</sup> June) from Mr. Skidmore.

‘With regard to the Lammas site, in my opinion I think it will be a total waste of time, effort and money to clear the site as it will re-grow and will be a recurring problem each year.’

After discussion, it was agreed to write to Mr. Abel Smith stating that we are concerned to receive his letter rejecting our offer to provide a rabbit-proof fence on the boundary between our land and his land. And, we are also surprised by his rejection of fencing as a solution because, in his letter of 14<sup>th</sup> November 2001, he actually suggested that a solution to the rabbit problem was a rabbit-proof fence.

Mr. Abel Smith also to be informed that we have been advised by several operators that the elimination of the habitat would be largely ineffective and would have to be repeated on an annual basis. Moreover, we are concerned that a number of parishioners and the Countryside Management Service would object to the destruction of the habitat. Our offer to provide a rabbit-proof fence will then be repeated, provided that he also provides such a fence on his portion of land. **Action: D. Filer/J. Allsop**

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Stock visited the Lammas on Friday 31st May 2002 and took photographs of Mr. Abel Smith's crop along the boundary of the land owned by the Parish Council. Parish Councillors studied these photographs and agreed that the crop damage was minimal. Also, the crop damage further along the boundary (not owned by the Parish Council) was no different.



**b) Sportsfield**

**i) Report**

Mrs. Dinnin carried-out the sportsfield report on the 11<sup>th</sup> June 2002, the result of which is as follows.

- **Sportsfield:**
  - Condition of grass Good – some molehills.
  - Litter Food.
  - Dog fouling OK.
  - Netball posts Tied-up to post.
  - General Good – needs cutting round tennis court areas.  
Grass cuttings tipped near courts
- **Children’s Playground:**
  - Condition of surface Good.
  - Litter/Litter bin OK.
  - Large swings OK.
  - Small swings OK.
  - See-Saw OK.
  - Multi-play and slide OK.
  - Two spring sit-on OK.
  - Comments All looking good and in much use.  
Bike ramps OK and in good condition.
- **Community Hall:**
  - General Condition (Exterior) OK. Store door scratched.
  - Litter bin OK.
  - Car Park OK.
  - General Good.
- **Multi-Purpose Play Area:**
  - Surface Good in general needs a sweep at field end.
  - Boundary Fencing Good.
  - Tennis nets Good – both up.
  - Litter Good.
  - General OK. Graffiti on gate nearest to Church field.
- **Great Innings Play Area:**
  - Equipment Good.
  - Surfaces Good.
  - Litter OK.
  - Dog fouling OK.
  - Comments Square hole cut out of matting at top of slide, some weeds around bases of equipment and grass needs cutting.
- **Allotments Area:**
  - Access Good.
  - Condition of paths between Allotments OK.
  - Condition of Allotments under cultivation OK.
  - Condition of Allotments not under cultivation As you would expect.
  - Litter OK.
  - Comments Good.
- **Culverts on Mill Lane**
  - Litter and rubbish in and around Culverts Lots.
  - Dog-fouling None.
  - Comments Good and not a rabbit in sight!
- **Salt bins**
  - Perrywood Lane Full and OK.
  - Great Innings Full.
  - Station Road Full.
  - Moorymead Close OK.
  - Hazeldell OK.
  - Garages between Glebe Close & Rectory Nearly empty.
- **Dog-waste bins**
  - Footpath 17 In use.
  - Sportsfield In use
  - Church Walk In use – no lid.

Walkern Road	In use.
Station Road	In use – no lid.
High Street (by Memorial)	In use – no lid.
Great Innings	In use.
Mill Lane	Empty.
• <b>General</b>	Is there a lid thief about?

• **Dog-waste bins**

The Clerk said that the lids on some of the dog-waste bins had broken. When this happens, the contractor removes them. The bins are still serviceable without a lid and will not be replaced until further breakages occur.

• **Hole in matting of slide at Great Innings Play Area**

The Clerk to write to Trevor Waldock (EHDC) asking that he inspects and repairs the matting.

**Action: J. Allsop**

## 5 Planning

### a) Applications

i) **Tinkers Corner, Whempstead**

Garage and garden store

Mr. Poulton said that Mr. Clerk had inspected the plans and visited the neighbouring residents and no objections were raised. It was agreed to write to EHDC informing them that the Parish Council has no comment on this application.

**Action: J. Allsop**

ii) **119 High Street – Amended plans**

Change of use from retail store

After discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council objects to the amended application for the same reasons as the original application. However, in the original application the Parish Council had expressed its concerns about the Post Office’s move to the shop in front of the proposed takeaway and the impact it may have on traffic movements in this area. Because the post office moved to this site approximately four months ago, the Parish Council can now confirm that traffic movement problems in the area had increased greatly.

It was agreed to write to EHDC informing them that the Parish Council strongly objects to the above planning application for the following reasons.

- Increase in traffic-movement in the area.
- Increase in parked cars in the area causing visibility problems for pedestrians and drivers.
- The Post Office has moved to the shop in front of the proposed takeaway. This has had an impact on traffic movements in this area, which has greatly increased.
- Increase of litter in the area.
- There is already a fast food (Chinese takeaway) in an adjacent building.
- The application is an over development of this type of activity.
- The Parish Council is concerned about the environmental impact an Indian takeaway will have on the immediate residential area, especially with regards to noise and pollution.
- The Parish Council does not want to lose a retail outlet and gain another fast-food outlet.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

iii) **Bulls Green Water Tower, off Bramfield road Bulls Green**

Telecommunications installation

Parish Councillors studied the amended plans and agreed to write to EHDC informing them that the Parish Council has no comment on this application.

**Action: J. Allsop**

iv) **Heath Mount School, Pre-prep Department, Woodhall Park**

Extension of pre-prep school and alteration to car parks

Parish Councillors studied the plans and agreed to write to EHDC informing them that the Parish Council has no comment on this application.

**Action: J. Allsop**

v) **Bramfield Road, Datchworth**

Proposed garage and carport. Conversion of integral garage to from habitable accommodation.

Parish Councillors studied the plans and agreed to contact Datchworth Parish Council to ask them what response they would like us to make to EHDC. Then write to EHDC accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**b) Decisions**

**i) 4 Old School Orchard**

Single storey conservatory extension

-EHDC permission granted.

**ii) 128 Hazeldell**

To turn a flat roof above a garage into a pitched roof

-EHDC permission granted.

**iii) 1 Motts Close**

Extension to lounge. Formation of playroom within existing curtilage. Provision of replacement garage

-EHDC permission refused.

**iv) 69-71 High Street**

Conversion of eaves space to family bathroom involving lowering of floor/ceiling and removal of internal wall

-EHDC permission granted.

**v) 18 Lammas Road**

Single-storey and two-storey extension

-EHDC permission granted.

**vi) Watton House, Flat 5**

Formation of dormer window-roof area above flat

-EHDC permission granted.

**vii) Lane Croft, Perrywood Lane**

Single-storey front extension

-EHDC permission granted.

**viii) 2 Rivershill**

First floor extension

-EHDC permission granted.

**6 Correspondence received**

**a) EHDC LEAF grant – Fencing works**

Mr. Poulton said that EHDC has approved our grant of £500. However, the Clerk said that a cheque had not yet been received.

Mr. Poulton to chase.

**Action: N. Poulton**

**b) Two letters from Roy Watson of Highfields, Whempstead**

Mr. Poulton read out two letters from Roy Watson regarding the recent planning application for a dwelling and barn in Whempstead. The contents of the letters were noted, but not discussed.

Mr. Poulton asked the Clerk if notices were being put up late on the Whempstead notice board. She said that she supplies Mr. Clark with notices, which he then puts up on the Whempstead notice board.

Mrs. Dinnin offered to take over this duty from Mr. Clark and will arrange to collect the key from him.

**Action: C. Dinnin**

**c) HeT Town Planning and Development**

Mr. Poulton read out a letter from HeT Town Planning and Development (dated 9<sup>th</sup> May 2002) which has been sent to some parishioners in the village asking them if they would be interested in selling some of their land for future development. The letter was sent to those properties with large gardens (including Mr. Knight, Mrs. Dinnin and the Clerk, who all live in Beane Road). The Clerk said that she had received a second letter HeT urging a response to their letter of 9<sup>th</sup> May.

Mr. Stock said that he had visited some elderly residents in Station Road who had received the letters and been very upset and worried by them. He advised the couple to ignore the letters and not to worry. He told the meeting that he felt very unhappy about the tone of the original and follow-up letters and could see how they can cause people to worry unduly.

It was agreed to send a copy of both letters to the planning department at EHDC and stating the Parish Council's concern at the contents of these letters, which has caused a great deal of concern to the recipients (especially the elderly) and feels it is an unprofessional way to act. The letter will ask EHDC for its views and possible actions on this subject.

**Action: J. Allsop/N. Poulton**

**d) Mr. Abel Smith – rabbits on Lammas**

This item was discussed under 4 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Rabbit fencing on Allotments and the Lammas (on page 8 of these minutes).

**e) Letter from Jeff Skidmore re clearance work on the Lammas**

This item was discussed under 4 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Rabbit fencing on Allotments and the Lammas (on page 8 of these minutes).

**f) The Reverend Manley Cooper re thanks for donation towards production of parish newsletter**

Mr. Poulton read out a letter dated 15<sup>th</sup> May from the Reverend Manley Cooper thanking the Parish Council for our generous contribution towards the running costs of the parish news.

**g) Letter from Mrs. C. Moore**

Mr. Poulton read out a letter dated 5<sup>th</sup> June from Carole Moore (Watton-at-Stone Scout and Guide Group) asking for a grant of £100 from the Parish Council to cover the cost of Golden Jubilee badges for all the children and adults in the group.

Mr. Poulton proposed that we give the Scout and Guide Group a grant of £100 from our Golden Jubilee Fund. Mr. Meischke seconded the motion and all present were in favour. **Action: J. Allsop**

**Mr. Poulton then reported on the following correspondence just received.**

**Letter from Mr and Mrs Pannell (of 12 Glebe Close)**

Mr. Poulton read out a letter dated 9<sup>th</sup> June from Mr & Mrs. Pannell concerning the condition of the footpath at the rear of Watton Primary School. Mr. Poulton said that he had also received a similar complaint from Mrs. Vi Ansell (of 47 Hockerill). The weeds at the bottom of the hedge on both sides of the footpath are overgrown and have fallen onto the pathway. Due to the recent wet weather these have caused the footpath to be very hazardous. Watton-at-Stone Primary School has recently cut back the hedge belonging to them.

It was agreed to write to the appropriate authority responsible for this footpath to ask them to clear the weeds. A copy of the letter to be sent to Mr. and Mrs Pannell and Mrs Ansell. **Action: J. Allsop**

**Letter from Mike Inman (16 Rivershill)**

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter (dated 10<sup>th</sup> June) from Mr. Inman.

Re – removal of green-waste from both ends of the allotments.

My personal view is once the site have been cleared they should not be used again.

It is a recipe for disaster to have all the allotment holders depositing their rubbish in two central areas.

The waste site nearest to Glebe Court is also being used by house owners who's gardens abut the allotments and who are not allotment holders.

In the past each allotment holder has been responsible for getting rid to their own waste by either burning or composting it on their own plot or bagging it up and taking it to the Ware Road Council tip.

EHDC should not have to pay out of this clearance work in future.

Each allotment holder would have to be made aware of the new directive if you decide to adopt it.'

The meeting closed for a short period to allow Mr. Riddle to give his opinion on the matter.

Mr. Riddle's opinion is the same as Mr. Inman's. After lengthy discussion on the subject the Parish Council decided to ask Jeff Skidmore to clear the two rubbish sites and remove the pallets from the allotments.

**Action: J. Allsop/N. Poulton**

Parish Councillors noted that in the past unauthorised dumping had taken place at the far end of the allotments, which the Parish Council had cleared.

It was agreed to write to all allotment holders to inform them of the removal of the pallets and that they are now responsible for their own waste management.

**Action: J. Allsop/N. Poulton**

**DEFRA – Annual return**

Mr. Poulton said that he has completed the DEFRA annual return form. Mrs. Dinnin proposed that Mr. Poulton sign the completed form. Mr. Knight seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to return the completed form to DEFRA.

**Action: J. Allsop**

## 7 Reports from other Organisations

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

Mr. Stock said that the Conservation Society is obtaining information for the update of the Village Guide from various sources and organisations in the village.

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

Mrs. Dinnin said that because the Youth Club is not likely to start-up again in the near future, Mrs Philips has asked if its equipment can be removed from the Memorial Hall. The items involved include a steel cupboard (containing various items), a billiard table and table-tennis tables. The tennis tables are in poor condition and need to be disposed of.

It was agreed to ask Jeff Skidmore to take any items to be retained to the Community Hall for storage and to dispose of all unwanted items.

**Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Poulton said that he would help Mr. Skidmore with the removal of the items from the Memorial Hall.

**Action: N. Poulton**

## 8 Accounts/Correspondence

### Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

#### Petty Cash

##### Receipts

3 videos

15.00

##### Payments

Village delivery by WAS PCC 10.00

15.00

Altra Image – film and processing 13.23

##### Cheques required

Don Chandler	4 hours @ £5.00 + 3 hours @ £5.25	55.75	*
J. Allsop	Phone calls and line rental to 4 <sup>th</sup> May	24.96	
Cornhill Insurance	Annual premium	1144.98	
Community Hall	Annual grant	5632.00	
Glasdon UK	2 Litterbin liners	48.92	
David Stock	3 rustic poles	8.85	
J. Allsop	June salary	491.82	
D. R. Monk	War Memorial maintenance	62.50	
Diocesan Board	Allotments rent	300.00	
J. Allsop	Card for D. Chandler = £0.99, 100 x 27p stamps = £27.00	27.99	
David Bunyan	Work to manhole covers	141.00	
Community Hall	For Don Chandler's wages (* see note below)	<u>167.25</u>	
		<u>7965.02</u>	

##### Cheques received

None

### Watton-at-Stone Community

#### Hall

##### Petty Cash

##### Receipts

Mr. Keen – Main Hall 100.00  
 Nikki Roberts – Main Hall 50.00  
 Floodlighting to 22.02.02 47.00

100.00

50.00

47.00

##### Payments

C. Bewley 49.5 hours cleaning 259.88

259.88

197.00

##### Cheques required

D. Chandler	32 hours @ £5.00 + 12 hours @ £5.25	223.00	*
Mrs. C. Babbage	Five weeks of opening and closing external toilets	26.25	
Wicksteed Leisure	Installation of bike ramps, safety grass and teen shelter	9091.87	
Christine Bewley	46 hours cleaning	241.60	
David Bunyan	Repair of cutter bracket	<u>76.38</u>	
		<u>9659.10</u>	

##### Cheques received

T. Harris	Pavilion and Main Hall hire	118.16
EHDC	Police grant for bike ramps and teen shelter	7737.75
Mrs. Gilbey	Main Hall hire	70.00
Denise Martin Harker	Pavilion hire	28.00
Denise Martin Harker	Pavilion hire	28.00
Parish Council	Annual grant	<u>5632.00</u>
		<u>13613.91</u>

- \* Cheque made out on Parish Council account to Don Chandler for £55.75 should have been a Community Hall payment. Similarly, cheque made out from Community Hall account to Don Chandler for £223.00 should have been a Parish Council payment. A payment from the Parish Council account of £167.25 to be made into Community Hall account to rectify the difference.

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

## 9 Chairman's / Clerk's Report

In future this item is to be placed on the agenda immediately after apologies for absence. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Articles for inclusion in the Parish News**

Articles on the following discussed by the Parish Council to be send to the editor of the Parish news for inclusion in next issue.

- Summer 2002 Play scheme – item discussed at the Annual Parish meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2002.
- Donation to Watton-at-Stone Scouts and Guide – item 6 g of these minutes.
- Footpath problem areas in the village.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **The meeting closed at 9.37 pm.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2002.**