

A meeting of the Wotton-at-Stone Parish Council was held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 1st May 2002 following the Annual Parish Meeting

Present: Mr. N. Poulton (Chairman) Mr. D. Stock (Vice-Chairman)
 Mrs. C. Dinnin Mrs. S. Davies (until 9.14 pm)
 Mr. V. Dunhill Mr. I. Knight
 Mrs. H. McCash

Members of Public: None

1 Apologies for absence

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

2 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 10th April 2002**

The following amendments were made to the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 10th April 2002.

- Page 4, Item 6 a, ii and iii, Planning Applications – Whempstead Lane – Dwelling House and Agricultural barn

‘Mr. Poulton pointed-out to Parish Councillors that the application was on a green field site.’

Add to the end of the above sentence:

‘, but this was an issue for EHDC,’

Page 6, Item 4 a, Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee

Insert after Manhole cover in sportsfield and before 2002 sportsfield grass cutting, the following sentence.

‘Mrs. Davies left the meeting and did not return.’

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

b) Review of actions

- **Present the Countryside Management Service report on the land at the rear of Rivershill**

Mr. Dunhill said that the Countryside Management Service had not submitted a report yet.

This item to remain on the agenda under review of actions.

Action: V. Dunhill

- **Write to EHDC re planning application for Dwelling house at Whempstead Lane**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to EHDC re planning application for Agricultural barn at Whempstead Lane**

This action point has been completed.

Mr. Poulton read out a letter (dated 26th April) from Roy Watson concerning the planning applications for a dwelling house and agricultural barn at Whempstead Lane.

After lengthy discussion about the contents of his letter, it was agreed to draw Mr. Watson’s attention to specific points.

Parish Councillors present at the meeting to be copied with a draft letter for their comments prior to the final version being sent to Mr. Watson.

Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop

Subsequent note

The letter sent to Mr. Watson stated that:

- every application is viewed as a stand-alone item and as it is presented to us
- all of the information available to us is taken into account, including comments/objections from local residents
- in this instance, no objections were received by us prior to, or during, the Parish Council discussion on the subject matter
- the dates of our meetings had been published in the Parish News and are always advertised in advance (together with the agenda) on the Parish Council’s notice boards, one of which is in Whempstead

- there is no link whatsoever between our reaction to the subject planning application and the fact that Mr. Skidmore does some contract work for the Parish Council (as do other contractors in the same type of business)
- the Parish Council is not the planning authority
- each application is judged on its own merits and there is no linkage between the subject planning application and other applications such as those in Datchworth which he mentioned.
- **Contact Wicksteed Leisure to find out when they will be installing the ramps and teen shelter**
This action point has been completed.
- **Chase HCC - Rights of Way re barrier on footpath leading to Church Lane**
Mr. Dunhill said that he had spoken to the Rights of Way Officer who had two proposals for the barrier.
 1. Remove the barrier and install two off-set bollards.
 2. Remove the barrier and apply road markings only.
 In the interest of safety, Parish Councillors agreed that the best option was to install the two off-set bollards.
Mr. Dunhill to inform the Rights of Way Officer accordingly. **Action: V. Dunhill**
- **Write to the Standards Board for England re Code of Conduct**
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to EHDC re Code of Conduct**
This action point has been completed.
- **Copy all Parish Councillors with amended end-of-year accounts for Community Hall**
This action point has been completed.
- **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 action point is still in progress. **Action: D. Filer/J. Allsop**
- **Look at values of items on Community Hall insurance policy**
This action point is still in progress. **Action: D. Filer/J. Allsop**
- **Report on RoSPA's recommendations re weekly inspection of Parish Council owned play equipment**
This action point is outstanding.
- **Accept Mr. Whitehead's quotation for installing post-and-rail fence**
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to all fencing contractors re their quotations for the post-and-rail fence**
This action point has been completed.
- **Write a letter of thanks to EHDC re grant towards installation of post-and-rail fence**
This action point has been completed.
- **Accept Mr. Bunyan's quotation re work to manhole covers and two gable ends of the Community Hall**
This action point is outstanding. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Write to Mr. Abel Smith re rabbit problem on the Lammas**
This action point has been completed.
Refer to item 4 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Rabbit fencing on Allotments and the Lammas (on page 5 of these minutes).
- **Meet on the Lammas on Saturday 14th April to discuss rabbit problem**
This action point has been completed.
- **Inspect the footpath between the MPPA and the sportsfield to see if it is unsafe and rectify if required**
Mr. Knight said that he had inspected the footpath and, in his opinion, it does not cause a safety issue. He said that the uneven slabs would bed-down when the ground becomes wet. Mr. Knight said that he had discussed his views with Mr. Meischke, and both are happy with the situation.
- **Contact Tesco to remove the shopping trolley by the bridge in Mill Lane**
Mr. Poulton said that the shopping trolley had been removed.
- **Write to EHDC re planning application for 1 Motts Close**
This action point has been completed.

- **Write to EHDC re planning application for Flat 5, Watton House**
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to Rev. Simon Manley-Cooper, Watton-at-Stone PCC enclosing donation towards production of the Parish News**
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to EHDC re street cleansing and grounds maintenance contracts**
This action point has been completed.
- **Send Alan Rattue grant towards Queens Golden Jubilee exhibition**
This action point has been completed.
- **Arrange for Sports and Social Club hire agreement to be signed**
This action point has been completed.
Mr. Stock reminded the Clerk that he still awaited a copy of the updated version of the hire agreement (for casual users) for final checking.
The Clerk to send him a copy without further delay. **Action: J. Allsop**

c) Action points outstanding for more than two months

- **Visit the Clerk to update the virus detector and resolve some problems associated with the e-mail software**
The Clerk said that this action point remains outstanding.
Mr Dunhill volunteered to complete the action point himself. **Action: V. Dunhill**
- **Draft the Parish Council's responses to HCC's documents concerning schooling and school transportation**
This action point is still outstanding **Action: C. Clark**
- **Ask the School to contact EHDC's dog-warden (Mike Abbey) direct re dog-fouling problems**
This action point is still outstanding **Action: C. Clark**
It was agreed to e-mail Mr. Clark asking him to respond to the above two action points without further delay. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Prepare instructions on how to use the lock to the external door adjacent to the car park**
This action point is still outstanding **Action: J. Meischke**
It was agreed to e-mail Mr. Meischke asking him to respond to the above action point without delay. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **On completion of the above action point enclose these instructions with the Community Hall hire agreement**
This action point cannot be progressed until the above action point has been completed. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Speak to Tony Bradford about the need for any tree surgery on the Lammas**
This item to be discussed under 4 a, Environment Sub-Committee – PPP (on page 5 of these minutes).
- **Draft a letter to be sent to all allotment holders concerning the compost bins**
Mr. Poulton said that EHDC had not emptied the compost bins on the allotments because they have received an exorbitant quotation of £845 from their contractor. Mr. Poulton has kept the allotment holders informed verbally.
This item to remain an action point. **Action: N. Poulton**

3 Specific Items

a) Playground equipment

Mr. Poulton reported that the three bike-ramps and the teen-shelter were installed today and are already being used.

b) Barrier on footpath leading to Church Lane

This item was discussed under item 2b, Review of Actions - Chase HCC - Rights of Way re barrier on footpath leading to Church Lane (on page 2 of these minutes).

c) Code of Conduct

All Parish Councillors present at the meeting signed a written undertaking to duly and faithfully fulfil the requirements of this role according to the best of their judgement and ability. Also, to observe the code as to the conduct which is expected of members of the Wotton-at-Stone Parish Council.

The Clerk to arrange for Mr. Clark, Mr. Filer and Mr. Meischke to sign a copy of the written undertaking.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Poulton read out a letter dated 11th April from Councillor M. Carver (Leader of the Council, EHDC) requesting to know if all our members had completed and signed the Notice of Registrable Interests and if they had any problems with it.

It was agreed to write to Councillor Carver informing him that all Parish Councillors have now signed the Code of Conduct. However, Parish Councillors signed under duress and felt that the Notice of Registrable Interests document was an infringement of their privacy. **Action: J. Allsop**

d) Ornate Village sign

Mrs. McCash said that she was getting the names of the suppliers of the ornate signs in Datchworth, Little Hadham and Hertford Heath.

Mrs. Dinnin said that she had sent for a brochure from a sign-making company.

e) Grass verges – monthly inspection

Currently, the grass verges throughout the village are in a good condition. This item was on the agenda throughout the 2001 grass-cutting season because the Parish Council wanted to monitor the EH Highways Partnership’s new contractor.

It was agreed that, because the new contractor is providing a high-level of service, there is no need for this item to remain on the agenda.

4 Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

There was nothing to report under Budget & Finance Sub-Committee.

Community Hall Trustees

There was nothing to report under Community Hall Trustees.

Comment [C1]:

Recreation & Amenities

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

- **Post-and-rail fence**

Mr. Poulton said that Nick Whitehead had installed the fence, and a claim has been sent to EHDC for the £500 grant.

- **Manhole cover in sportsfield**

Refer to item 2 b, Review of Actions - Accept Mr. Bunyan’s quotation re work to manhole covers and two gable ends of the Community Hall (on page 2 of these minutes).

Environment

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

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

A copy of the draft byelaws for Watton Green and the Lammas have been sent to the Department for Transport (Local Government and the Regions), and we await a response.

- **Condition of footpaths in Hazeldell**

Mr. Stock said that at our March meeting we had agreed to this item be placed on the agenda for May. He then reminded Parish Councillors that we wrote to the EH Highways Partnership in February informing them of the poor condition of the footpaths in Hazeldell and asking if there is any schedule in place for the routine re-surfacing of these footpaths. Also, if there are any schedules in place for the re-surfacing of other footpaths within the village. Ron Jack (EH Highways Partnership) responded stating that at the time there were no plans for any remedial works to be carried out, however he would inspect the footways in the new financial year and in the meantime asked to know of any problem areas.

Mrs. Davies said that the footpath on the High Street between Motts Close and the exit road to Longmeadow was in a poor state.

Mr. Stock asked Parish Councillors to identify any problem areas to him. He will then meet with them to inspect problem areas. **Action: All Parish Councillors/D. Stock**

Mr. Stock to write to Ron Jack accordingly. **Action: D. Stock**

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

We are awaiting a response from Mr. Abel Smith before this item can be progressed further.

- **PPP**

Mr. Dunhill said that he had not contacted Mr. Bradford about the need for any tree surgery on the Lammas but had instead spoken with the Countryside Management Service (Eastern Division) on the subject. They have agreed to meet with him on-site.

Action: V. Dunhill

Mr. Dunhill said that we will need to look at what items are to be included in our application for a PPP grant for next year. The main items will continue to be strimming works, but he would also look at additional signposting for a proposed circular walk.

Mr. Dunhill said that the HCC Rights of Way Officer has said that there is no need for a sign post on the footpath between Great Innings and Hazeldell because the path is in a residential area and has a tarmac surface.

Mr. Poulton asked Mr. Dunhill to walk the footpath along the riverbank, which runs from Walkern Road to the Lammas, because the trees are very overgrown making access difficult. Mr. Dunhill said that it might be possible to get funding for work to this path from our Stewardship Agreement.

Action: V. Dunhill

b) Sportsfield

Mr. Poulton said that Don Chandler had been taken into hospital and therefore asked Parish Councillors to take this into account when hearing the sportsfield report (i.e. because Don is responsible for the litterpicking on and around the sportsfield).

It was agreed to send Don Chandler a Get Well card.

Action: N. Poulton

i) Report

Mr. Clark carried-out the sportsfield report on the 30th April 2002, the result of which is as follows.

- **Sportsfield:**

Condition of grass	Good.
Litter	Lots of litter around playground and outside MPPA.
Dog fouling	None- bin in use.
Netball posts	OK.
General	Good apart from litter – some graffiti on benches and One door of MPPA.

- **Children's Playground:**

Condition of surface	Good.
Litter/Litter bin	In use.
Large swings	OK
Small swings	OK
See-Saw	OK
Multi-play and slide	OK
Two spring sit-on	OK
Comments	Slight damage to two seats of large swing.

- **Community Hall:**

General Condition (Exterior)	OK.
Litter bin	In use.
Car Park	Full - ? workers at Glebe Court.
General	OK.

- **Multi-Purpose Play Area:**

Surface	Good.
Boundary Fencing	2 loose and 1 missing bolt – far side from Church Walk.
Tennis nets	Erected.
Litter	None.
General	Excellent – apart from litter outside.

- **Great Innings Play Area:**

Equipment	Good.
Surfaces	Good.
Litter	None.
Dog fouling	None.
Comments	Clean and tidy.

• Allotments Area:	
Access	OK.
Condition of paths between Allotments	Good.
Condition of Allotments under cultivation	Good.
Condition of Allotments not under cultivation	OK.
Litter	None.
Comments	Very presentable.
• Culverts on Mill Lane	
Litter and rubbish in and around Culverts	Lots <u>in</u> culverts.
Dog-fouling	Some in Mill Lane and entrance to Lammas.
Comments	None other than above.
• Salt bins	
Perrywood Lane	Full – OK.
Great Innings	Full – OK.
Station Road	Full – OK.
Moorymead Close	Full – some litter inside.
Hazeldell	Full – OK.
Garages between Glebe Close & Rectory	Nearly empty – OK.
• Dog-waste bins	
Footpath 17	In use.
Sportsfield	In use.
Church Walk	Missing lid and empty.
Walkern Road	Empty but OK.
Station Road	Missing lid and in use.
High Street (by Memorial)	Missing lid - in use.
Great Innings	Full.
Mill Lane	Empty.
• General	Dog-fouling in Church Walk.

5 Planning

a) Applications

i) Lane Croft, Perrywood Lane

Erection of feed barn

ii) Lane Croft, Perrywood Lane

Single-storey front extension

The above two items were discussed together.

Mr. Poulton said that Mr. Filer had visited the properties nearest to Lane Croft and no objections had been raised.

It was agreed to write to EHDC informing them that the Parish Council has no comment on this application.

Action: J. Allsop

iii) Blue Bury Farm, Walkern Road

Agricultural dwelling

Parish Councillors studied the plans for this application.

It was agreed to write to EHDC informing them that the Parish Council would like to see an agricultural tie applied to this application.

Action: J. Allsop

iv) 18 Lammas Road

Single-storey and two-storey extension

Mr. Poulton said that the neighbours had shown some concern about light, but agreed that the extension would provide more privacy for them.

Parish Councillors studied the plans for this application.

After discussion, it was agreed to write to EHDC informing them that the Parish Council has no comment on this application.

Action: J. Allsop

v) **Gregory's Buildings, Hogswood Lane, off Mill Lane**

The installation of 3 no. antennas and 1 dish antenna on the existing telecommunications tower plus equipment at ground level

Parish Councillors viewed the plans for this application.

It was agreed to write to EHDC informing them that the Parish Council has no comment on this application.

Action: J. Allsop

vi) **29 High Street**

Single-storey and two-storey side, rear and front extension

Parish Councillors studied the plans for this application.

After lengthy discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council objects to the above application on the following grounds.

1. It is an over-development of the site.
2. The development would have a detrimental visual impact on the street scene and therefore not in keeping.

It was agreed that Mrs. Davies visits the neighbours to ascertain their view on this application and to add their comments to those of the Parish Council if appropriate.

Actions: S. Davies

It was agreed that a letter be sent to the planning department accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

6 Correspondence received

a) The Standards Board of England re Code of Conduct

The Standards Board for England wrote on the 17th May to acknowledge receipt of our letter adopting the Model Code of conduct as it local code, with effect from 10th April 2002. In their letter they remind us that Parish Councillors had two months from the date of adopting the code to sign a written undertaking to abide by it.

b) EHDC – Street numbering – Great Innings development

EHDC wrote on 24th April to advise us that the street numbering for the new development of houses in Great Innings will be 92 to 110 (even).

c) Denis Filer – rabbit problem at Watton Green

Mr. Poulton read out a letter dated 26th April from Mr. Filer re a serious rabbit problem on his property. One of the problems is that the wooded area to the west of the Brambles (which is owned by the Parish Council) is where the rabbits appear to live and breed. Mr. Winser (of 16 Tanners Way, Hunsdon) has agreed to carry out shooting and ferreting on Mr. Filer's land. However, this could be to little effect unless some action is taken on the adjoining Parish Council land. Mr. Filer requests that the Parish Council grant a license to Mr. Stephen Winser to use ferrets on the Parish Council land adjoining his property

Mr. Stock said that he would not like to see the Parish Council issue licenses too freely. However, in this case Mr. Filer is genuinely trying to control rabbits on his land. Mr. Stock then proposed that the Parish Council issue a license to Mr Winser to ferret (not shoot) in the wooded area to the west of the Brambles (a map outlining the area involved to be attached to the agreement). Mr. Poulton seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop

- Mrs Davies left the meeting at 9.14 pm.

7 Reports from other Organisations

• Watton-at-Stone Conservation Society

Mr. Stock said that the route for the Millennium walk is currently being finalised. He reminded Parish Councillors that sometime ago the Conservation Society had asked the Parish Council (via himself) if it would be willing to fund the route markers for the walk (i.e. from the Millennium fund). Obviously, as the Millennium year is now over these funds are not applicable. However, the Parish Council could make money available from its Golden Jubilee fund.

Mr. Poulton suggested that before the Parish Council agrees to any funding, the Conservation Society should approach David Thorogood who manages the EHDC LEAF fund. Mr. Stock to give the appropriate information to the Conservation Society.

Action: D. Stock

The Conservation Society's Golden Jubilee project is to update the Village Guide. Mr. Stock felt this would be a worthwhile project to grant-aid from the Golden Jubilee fund, if and when approached. This was agreed in principle by all present. Mr. Stock to inform the Conservation Society accordingly.

Action: D. Stock

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

Mr. Dunhill attended the recent AGM of the Scout and Guide Group. A secretary and treasurer were appointed at the meeting, but not a chairman. The Scout group had disbanded due to dwindling numbers, but is due to start up again in May with new recruits.

Currently, there are leaders for all the different groups (i.e. Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Rainbows, Brownies and Guides).

8 Accounts/Correspondence

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash

Receipts

1 video

5.00

Payments

None

Cheques required

Watton PCC	Donation towards running costs of Parish News	300.00
Allan Rattue	Grant from Jubilee Fund	194.74
HCC	Lighting charges	343.12
J. Allsop	April salary	<u>491.82</u>
		<u>1329.68</u>

Cheques received

EHDC	Leaf clearance	<u>300.00</u>
		<u>300.00</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash

Receipts

Mr. Keen – Main Hall

100.00

Payments

TXU Energi

135.04

Nikki Roberts – Main Hall

30.00

135.04

Floodlighting to 22.02.02

90.00

220.00

Cheques required

N. J. Whitehead	To replace post-and-rail fence	<u>1410.00</u>
		<u>1410.00</u>

Cheques received

Conservation Society	Pavilion hire	7.00
Badminton Club	Main Hall hire	155.00
G. Pay	Main Hall hire	<u>199.80</u>
		<u>361.80</u>

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

9 Chairman's / Clerk's Report

- **Apologies for absence**

Mrs. McCash gave her apologies for absence for the June 2002 meeting.

- **The meeting closed at 9.24 pm.**

- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 11th June 2002.**