

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 10th December 2003

Present:	Mr. N. Poulton (Chairman)	Mr. D. Stock (Vice-Chairman)
	Mr. C. Clark (after 1927)	Mrs. C. Dinnin
	Mr. V. Dunhill	Mr. D. Filer (after 2026)
	Mr. I. Knight	
	Mr. J. Meischke	Mr. M. Smith
Speaker:	Paul Rossington (EHDC)	
Public:	Mrs. B. Knight, Mr. P. Knight, Mr. R. Maskell and Mr. P. Aknai (all of whom are members of the Watton-at-Stone Conservation Society)	

Mr. Poulton welcomed Paul Rossington (EHDC) and members of the Conservation Society to the meeting.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. McCash.

2 Public Participation

None.

3 Declaration of Interests

Mr. Smith declared a prejudicial interest in 6 b, Review of Actions - Liase on the purchase of 12' railway sleepers for Community Hall car park (on page 1 of these minutes).

Mr. Smith will remain in the meeting when this item is discussed.

Mr. Poulton declared a personal interest in item 7 a i, Planning Applications - Moat Farm, 83 Bramfield Road, Bulls Green Construction of 60 x 30 metre outdoor riding arena with surrounding timber fence (on page 5 of these minutes).

Mr. Poulton will remain in the meeting when this item is discussed.

Mr. Meischke declared a prejudicial interest in item 7 a iii, Planning Applications - 64 Rivershill, Proposed extension to garage and open porch (on page 5 of these minutes).

Mr. Meischke will therefore leave the meeting when the item is discussed.

4 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

Mr. Poulton said that the following items had been received after the agenda was published.

- i) Letter from Robinson and Hall, agents for the Abel Smith Estate. This item to be discussed under 10 f, Correspondence received (on pages 11 and 12 of these minutes).
- ii) 2 Perrywood Lane - This item to be discussed under 7 a iv), Planning Applications (on pages 5 and 6 of these minutes).
- iii) HCC –School Admissions 2004/05 - This item to be discussed under 10 g, (on page 12 of these minutes).
- iv) EHDC – Christmas Tree recycling scheme This item to be discussed under 10 h, Correspondence received (on page 12 of these minutes).

5 Paul Rossington (EHDC) - planning issues

The meeting closed at 1927.

The meeting opened again at 2026.

Paul Rossington outlined the planning procedures for the benefit of the Parish Council and members of public present. A very full discussion then took place during which Mr. Rossington explained background issues associated with planning decisions.

The Parish Council expressed its concerns about the lack of consultation and information on certain planning matters. It was agreed that attempts would be made to improve channels of communication.

Mr. Rossington also explained that attempts were in hand to improve the planning information available on the internet.

The Clerk to forward the e-mail she sent to EHDC's planning department asking for a time-extension on 64 Rivershill, for which no e-mail response was received.

Action: J. Allsop

6 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12th November 2003**

The following amendment was made to the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 12th November 2003.

- Page 1, Item 4, Chairman's/Clerk's Report

Penultimate paragraph, delete the words 'and notify Hertfordshire Constabulary accordingly'.

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

b) Review of actions

- **Attend Hertfordshire Constabulary meeting on 1st December and report back to Parish Council**

This action point has been completed. Mr. Filer will report on this item under 10 d, Correspondence received - Hertfordshire Police Authority – Policing and Community Safety – The Way Forward (on page 11 of these minutes).

- **Send Mrs. Watton-Forster copies of various booklets concerning Wotton-at-Stone**

This action point has been completed.

- **Discuss details on the installation of the post for the ornate village sign**

Val Weaver (Hertfordshire Highways) is checking with the statutory authorities (i.e. gas, electricity etc.) to see if they have any services in the ground on which we intend to erect the ornate village sign.

- **Investigate items highlighted in Hertfordshire Highways letter concerning the Bull footpath**

Mr. Meischke said that he had investigated the items highlighted in the letter and written to Val Weaver as follows.

'Further to your telephone conversation with Parish Councillor John Meischke on Friday 28th November, please find enclosed copies of HM Land Registry documentation relating to the right of way footpath linking Rivershill and the High Street.

John apologies for the delay in getting this information to you, which was due to unforeseeable circumstances. If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact him on 01992 550256.'

This item to remain on the agenda under Specific Items until it is resolved.

Agenda: 01/04

- **Give Mr. Poulton a copy of our letter to WAGN requesting a revised station car-park sign**

This action point has been completed.

- **Speak to Norma Unwin (WAGN) re request for revised station car-park sign during our meeting on 2nd December**

Mr. Poulton said that he spoke to Norma Unwin on 2nd December re the station car-park sign. She had misunderstood our request and thought we wanted the sign at the High Street/Great Innings roundabout revised. She has promised to have the station car park sign revised as requested.

This item to remain on the agenda under Specific Items until it is resolved.

Agenda: 01/04

- **Give Mr. Poulton a copy of the updated Village Directory for final checking before it is copied for distribution**

This action point has been completed.

- **Contact Martin Tipper to arrange to move the roller on the sportsfield**

Mr. Meischke said that the sportsfield is too wet to move the roller at present.

- **Accept the quotation from Sunstopper Blinds and Awnings**

This action point has been completed.

- **Liase on the purchase of 12' railway sleepers for Community Hall car park**

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Smith had discussed the purchase of 12' sleepers. Subsequently, Mr. Poulton e-mailed Mr. Stock, Mr. Meischke and Mr Filer to seek their approval to purchase them.

- **Investigate a suitable way of anchoring the railway sleepers to the ground**

Mr. Smith has established a suitable method for doing this.

- **Chase ADL re work to Community Hall roof**

This item to be discussed under 9 a, Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee - Repair of roof tiles (on page 8 of these minutes).

- **Chase Hertfordshire Highways re damage to tree in Hazeldell**

No response has been received from Hertfordshire Highways regarding the damage to this tree. The Clerk to chase.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Poulton said that because none of the trees in Hazeldell are covered by TPOs or are in the conservation area, there is nothing we can do to stop them being removed from the grassed verges by HCC. Nor can they be made to replace trees that have died as they are under no legal obligation to do. Mr. Stock said that this was not acceptable nor is it in accordance with our policy regarding trees within our parish.

- **Ask Tim Clark if he would be willing to do work on PC land at Rivershill again this year**

This action point has been completed.

Mr. Meischke said that Tim Clark will do the work sometime in the New Year.

This item to be placed on the agenda for the Parish Council meeting to be held in March 2004.

Agenda 04/04

- **Give Ted Brown a revised duties-schedule to reflect his increased hours**

This action point has been completed.

- **Chase PC Ivens to ask him when Watton and Whempstead will be able to use the speed-warning equipment**

This action point has been completed.

Mr. Poulton said that the Clerk had spoken to PC Paul Scott, who told her that he had tested the speed-warning equipment and found it to be faulty. It has now been returned to the manufacturer for repair and PC Scott will contact the Parish Council when it is returned.

Mr. Poulton said that PC Ivens has been off sick for the past two months.

The Clerk to chase PC Scott if he has not contacted us within the next three weeks. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Place blotting paper between each page of the Women's Institute photograph album**

This action point has been completed.

- **Give Mr. Filer copies of the gas bills**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 9 a, Budget & Finance Sub-Committee - Gas supply (on page 7 of these minutes).

- **Obtain quotation from Sodexho for the cutting of the sportsfield grass in 2004**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 9 a, Budget & Finance Sub-Committee - Quotation from Sodexho for the cutting of the sportsfield grass in 2004 (on page 7 of these minutes).

- **Place notice in the Parish News stating that the Community Hall hire charges will remain the same as for 2003**

Mr. Filer will be placing a notice in the January 2004 issue of the Parish News.

Refer to 12 Items for Parish News (on page 12 of these minutes).

- **Obtain scale of salary increases from the Society of Local Council Clerks**

This information is not yet available from the SLCC.

The Clerk said that Mrs. McCash had informed her that she had only just received the new National Insurance tables and therefore had not worked out what the Parish Council's and Clerk's contributions would be for next year.

This item to be placed on the agenda under Budget & Finance Sub-Committee for the Parish Council meeting to be held on 14th January 2004.

Agenda: 01/04

- **Investigate regulations on self-employment status**

Because Mrs. McCash was unable to report on this item, she has asked that it be placed on the agenda under Budget & Finance Sub-Committee for the Parish Council meeting to be held on 14th January 2004.

Agenda: 01/04

- **Return completed precept forms**

The precept forms have now been signed and will be posted to EHDC tomorrow.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Send a donation of £300 to the Watton-at-Stone PCC**

This action point has been completed.

- **Contact Harknett Street Lighting Services re repair of the two floodlights at Community Hall**

This item to be discussed under 9 a, Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee - Community Hall lighting (on page 8 of these minutes).

- **Contact Herts Tree Care to obtain a quotation for work to a poplar tree on the Lammas**

Mrs. McCash has contacted Herts Tree Care, who will be making a site visit on 12th December 2003.

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

Agenda: 01/04

- **Contact the Countryside Management Service re Lammas bank**

Mr. Stock said that he had contacted the Countryside Management Service and explained our objective with regard to land-management of the areas of the Lammas and the Lammas bank within our ownership. Subsequently, he met Peter Garrett, (CMS) on site, together with Mrs. Dinnin and Mr. Poulton. Mr. Stock was pleased to say that the site meeting was very successful and CMS is keen to help achieve our objectives

Mrs. Dinnin to report on this item under 9 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Lammas land-management (on page 9 of these minutes).

- **Write to Mr. Abel Smith re Lammas bank**

Mr. Stock read out the following letter that he sent to Mr. Abel Smith on 19th November.

**‘Subject: Meeting between Mr. R. Abel Smith, Parish Councillors C. Dinnin and D. Stock
re land management of the Lammas**

Dear Mr. Abel Smith,

The outcome of the above meeting was followed by an on-site meeting of members of the council’s Environment Subcommittee and then discussed by the Parish Council on 12th November 2003.

As a result of this, I can tell you that a substantial budgetary provision has now been made by the Parish Council for some land-management tasks on the areas of the Lammas, and the Lammas bank, within its ownership.

In addition, and with a view to constructing a long-term Management Plan, we are seeking independent expert advice on what work needs to be done and how much it is going to cost. Once we have achieved this, and as already suggested, we would like to meet with you on-site to discuss the matter further.

We look forward to working with you so that, together, we can achieve a successful outcome with regard to the land management of the Lammas and the Lammas bank as a whole.’

No response has been received from Mr. Abel Smith.

- **Write to allotment holders**

Mr. Poulton said that this action point had not been completed because he and Mr. Stock wanted the Parish Council to agree the contents of the following letter before it is sent.

‘As from now, the Parish Council is to ask all new allotment-holders to sign the attached Tenancy Agreement.

We are sure that you will agree that the document is quite straight forward and is in the best interest of all allotment holders and the Parish Council. For this reason, and to avoid any problems in the future, we would appreciate it if you would also sign the agreement and return it to me. If it is helpful, I will be happy to then let you have a photocopy of the signed agreement for your future reference.

Also, to clarify any misunderstands that may have occurred recently, the Parish Council has asked me to confirm the following.

1. Nothing has changed with regard to the long-standing relationship between the Parish Council and the Allotment Holders. It remains as it has been in the past.
2. The Parish Council is responsible to the Diocesan Board with regard to the conditions of the lease.
3. The Parish Council is responsible for all management aspects of the allotments (which includes rent-collection, allocation of plots to individuals and the removal of such). Again, nothing has changed.
4. The recently-formed Allotment and Garden Association is a ‘club’ which has been established to work for the benefit of the allotment holders, e.g. the bulk-purchase of seeds, raising funds to improve the site, representing the allotment holders as and when appropriate.
5. The Parish Council is happy to support the Allotment and Garden Association in its attempts to raise funds for approved projects and improvements.
6. Allotment holders are under no obligation to become members of the Allotment and Garden Association.

Please be assured that the Parish Council remains fully committed to maintaining and protecting the allotment site so that we can all continue to enjoy it as a local amenity.

If you have any questions about the contents of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact Nigel Poulton (Chairman) on 427568 or David Stock (Vice-Chairman) on 830875.’

It was agreed by all present that this letter be sent to all allotment holders, together with the allotment agreement.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Write to HCC re damage to lamp column in Hockerill in May 2000**

This action point has been completed.

- **Speak to Mrs. Hale re memorial plaque**

Mr. Poulton said that he had spoken to Mrs. Hale and she will be responsible for the purchase and installation of the memorial plaque in memory of her husband.

- **Write to Bengeo Rural Parish Council re 2004 Inter Parish Conference**

This action point has been completed.

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

- **Contact Tony Bradford to ask him for a copy of the TPO list and map**

Tony Bradford left a message on the Clerk's answer phone to say that he has not kept any information on TPOs since his time as a Parish Councillor.

Mr. Poulton said that whilst looking through the filing cupboard, the TPO map and list of trees had been found. Mr. Dunhill said that he currently had the map at home.

It was agreed that it would be useful if all Parish Councillors were given a copy of the map.

If possible, the map to be reduced in size and copied to all Parish Councillors.

Action: V. Dunhill

- **Copy the Village Directory for distribution around the village**

This action point has been completed.

7 **Planning**

a) **Applications**

i) **Moat Farm, 83 Bramfield Road, Bulls Green**

Construction of 60 x 30 metre outdoor riding arena with surrounding timber fence

Mr. Poulton said that this application lies on the boundary of our parish with Datchworth. The Clerk contacted Datchworth Parish Council to find out their views on the application. Because they had no objections to the plan, we have notified EHDC that we have no comments on this application.

Parish Councillors agreed with this decision.

ii) **124 High Street**

Single and two- storey rear extension

Mr. Dunhill said he had spoken to both adjoining neighbours. One had no problems with the plans, whereas the other neighbour was unhappy about how close the proposed extension would be to their boundary.

The foundations of the previous application, submitted in March 2003, would have encroached on the neighbouring property and was refused by EHDC. The Parish Council's response to this application was:

'The Parish Council has no comments on the above application. However, they are concerned that the proposed development extends to the boundary line.'

After discussion with Mr. Poulton and Mr. Stock about the current application, Mr. Dunhill e-mailed the Clerk asking her to respond in the same manner as for the application in March 2003. However, the Clerk did not read Mr. Dunhill's e-mail thoroughly and informed EHDC that the Parish Council had no comment on this application.

Parish Councillors agreed that if the new application is considered too close to the boundary then the planning department will not grant permission.

Note: The Clerk has subsequently e-mailed an apology to Mr. Dunhill and copied this e-mail to both Mr. Poulton and Mr. Stock.

iii) **64 Rivershill**

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

Proposed extension to garage and open porch

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

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Meischke returned to the meeting.

iv) **Ponderosa, 2 Perrywood Lane, Watton-at-Stone**

Stable x 2

Mr. Filer said that he had spoken to the neighbours and they had no objections to the application. However, they were concerned about the removal of some conifers that currently screen them from Ponderosa.

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

Action: J. Allsop

b) Decisions

None.

c) Appeals

i) 1 Hazeldell

2 Storey Side Extension

After discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council write in support of this appeal and inform the planning inspectorate that a similar extension was granted for 50 Hazeldell.

Action: J. Allsop

Note: The following letter was sent to Planning Inspectorate.

‘The Watton at Stone Parish Council supports the applicant’s appeal for planning permission for an extension on the above property. This application is similar to an extension at 50 Hazeldell, which was built in two stages (planning permission was granted by EHDC for the second stage, a first floor extension, in November 1999).

The Parish Council consulted the neighbours to establish if they had any objections to these plans and none were received.

Therefore, the Parish Council still has no objections to this side extension and asks the Inspector to grant the application accordingly.’

8 Specific Items

a) Ornate village sign

The Clerk said that Mrs. McCash had been unsuccessful in trying to contact Mr. Mould.

It was agreed that the Clerk contacts Mr. Mould to find out when we can expect delivery of the ornate village sign. This to be followed by a letter confirming the outcome of their conversation.

Action: J. Allsop

b) Update on ‘Home to School Transport’

Mr. Poulton said that Roy Oakley, of 45 High Street, made an excellent presentation of the petition to HCC during its full Council meeting on 25th November. He was well supported by parents of Watton Primary School.

Mr. Poulton, who attended as a District Councillor, said that County Councillors seemed genuinely interested in the view of the parents of pupils at Watton-at-Stone Primary Schools.

Mrs. Dinnin asked if we knew how long it would take HCC to make a decision on the matter. Mr. Poulton said he did not know.

c) Barrier by Old School Orchard

Mr. Poulton read out the following e-mail from Valerie Weaver (Hertfordshire Highways).

‘Ian has now been out and inspected the barrier problem in Old School Orchard as requested by Watton-at-Stone Parish Council in their letter dated 26th October 2003.

There does seem to be room for improving the present situation by rearranging the barriers/painting them white and sliding out the footway. I have therefore added this request to the Parish Councils reserve list for consideration next financial year for maintenance measures.

I will drop a letter to Jane confirming this is the situation.’

d) Meeting with WAGN on 2nd December

Mr. Poulton said that the WAGN meeting had a reasonable attendance. Norma Unwin (WAGN) was present together with the Route Director for WAGN, who demonstrated a positive attitude throughout the meeting.

WAGN agreed to investigate the complaints about our station and train services as submitted by the Conservation Society.

Mr. Stock said that these meetings were proving to be worthwhile, though attendance could be better.

A follow-up meeting will be arranged in due course.

e) Alchemy Metals - Goods vehicle license application

We have been informed by Benington Parish Council that Alchemy Metals, who run a recycling plant in their village, had applied for an alteration to their Goods Operators Licence to permit access by 4-axle vehicles (instead of 3-axle vehicles). There is concern that this will mean that heavier and larger lorries will be using the approach roads, which are typical country lanes. Benington Parish Council wrote to the Traffic

Commissioners objecting to the application and were told that they could only consider responses from local authority and land-owners affected by the site. Because the approach roads to Benington pass through Whempstead, Benington Parish Council has asked if we wish to ask East Herts District Council and the County Council to comment.

Mr Clark asked that we support this request because the local residents had already expressed concern about the volume of traffic along the affected lanes as evidenced by the recent request to Hertfordshire Highways for a traffic survey. The Parish Council agreed that Hertfordshire Highways be contacted and asked to comment directly to the Traffic Commissioners by the 24th December, which is the official closing date for responses.

Mr. Clark to act accordingly.

Action: C. Clark

f) Traffic-calming in Whempstead

Mr Clark has now received, from Hertfordshire Highways, the results of the traffic survey which was carried out in July. So far, only the raw data has been sent. Hertfordshire Highways will analyse the figures in January and then publish their opinion of the data, hopefully in time for the Parish Council meeting in February.

Mr. Poulton asked Mr Clark to summarise the data and to put the full report on circulation. **Action: C. Clark**

9 Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

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

- **Quotation from Sodexo for the cutting of the sportsfield grass in 2004**

Sodexo Land Technology has given us a quotation of £651 (plus VAT) to cut the sportsfield grass during the 2004 season. This is an increase of £19 (plus VAT) on last year's price (i.e. an increase of 3%). The quotation is on same basis as for previous years (i.e. 20 flexible cuts, plus strimming around the perimeter of the sportsfield).

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

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Gas supply**

Mr. Filer said he had reviewed the gas-expenditure figures for this year and last. He found them to be comparable. He anticipates that the budget figures for 2004/05 are correct. The inflated expenditure figure for this year is due to a gas bill for 2002/03 being invoiced in 2003/04.

- **Clerk's salary**

This item was discussed under 6 b, Review of Actions - Obtain scale of salary increases from the Society of Local Council Clerks (on page 3 of these minutes).

- **Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) – Membership renewal for 2004**

The SLCC membership renewal is £72. The Society provides the Parish Council with legal advice and useful information about changes in legislation, e.g. changes in accounting practises. Although this information is also available from the Hertfordshire Association of Local Councils, the annual membership would be several hundred pounds.

Mr. Filer proposed that the Parish Council renew its annual membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks. Mr. Knight seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

Community Hall Trustees

A meeting of the Community Hall Trustees was set for Tuesday 30th December 2003 at 7.30 pm in the Community Hall.

Note: This meeting was cancelled and will now be held on Tuesday 13th January 2004 at 7.30 pm

Recreation & Amenities

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

- **Storage Room in Main Hall**

Mr. Meischke said that he had spoken with hirers of the Main Hall re shelving for the storage room in the Main Hall. He can obtain a large shelving unit for approximately £135 plus VAT.

Mr. Stock proposed that Mr. Meischke purchase the shelving unit. Mr. Dunhill seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: J. Meischke

- **MPPA floodlights**

Mr. Meischke said that the MPPA floodlights stopped working due to dampness in two of the four columns. Mimram Electrical has identified and repaired the fault for £200 plus VAT.

Mr. Meischke said that if there is a problem in any of the floodlighting columns, the whole system becomes inoperable. He agreed to ask Mimram Electrical to supply us with an estimate to install a trip board on each column to avoid this problem.

Action: J. Meischke

- **Community Hall lighting**

This item to be discussed at the next meeting of the Community Hall Trustees.

Agenda: CH

- **RoSPA safety inspection**

Mr. Meischke said that there are several discrepancies in RoSPA's report. The following letter was sent to RoSPA on 9th December.

'We are in receipt of your play area inspection report for Watton-at-Stone (dated 13th October 3003). Could you please amend your report to take into consideration the following comments.

- **Page 242 – Small swing**

'Note: We are concerned about the steep slope on the protective surface and would suggest it is accentuated with a brightly coloured contrasting paint to draw attention to a trip hazard.'

This note should not be attached to the swings (1 bay, 2 cradle seat) but refers to the Swing (2 bay, 4 flat with anti-wrap bars) on page 240.

- **Page 243 - Junior Multi Unit**

'EN 1176 compliance

The surfacing fails to meet EN 1176 in the following respects:

Insufficient protective surfacing has been provided to meet the recommendations of EN 1176 – near climber.'

John Yearley of RoSPA wrote (on 22nd April 2003) to Kevin Kingsnorth, Installation Manager, Wicksteed Leisure as follows.

'Watton-at-Stone

Further to our Post Installation Inspection at the above site, I confirm that in our opinion the 40 mm failure on the surfacing dimension is low risk and that any remedial action undertaken, other than total replacement of surfacing (which we do not feel necessary) is likely to present a hazard as small strips do not tend to adhere well to larger areas. Consequently we recommend acceptance of the surface as it is.

I hope that the above is helpful.'

The Parish Council accepted this recommendation and therefore would like you to attach your recommendation to the EN 1176 compliance in the subject report.

- **Skate board ramps**

These are **bike ramps** and were never intended for use by skate boarders. Please alter your report accordingly.

We look forward to your early reply.'

This item to be discussed at the next meeting of the Community Hall Trustees.

Agenda: CH

- **Changing room-drain**

Mr. Meischke said that the changing-room drains need rodding. He will ask Mr. Bunyan to do the work.

Action: J. Meischke

- **Repair of roof tiles**

Mr. Poulton said that the Parish Council accepted a quotation of £320 plus VAT from A.D.L. in October. However, they recently informed the Clerk that they would not be able to do the work until mid-January 2004. Mr. Poulton therefore contacted P. J. Roofing, who are the original installers of the Community Hall roof, and they have agreed to do the work early next week for £125 plus VAT.

It was agreed by all that we accept P. J. Roofing's quotation and notify A.D.L. accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Gate post**

Mr. Poulton said that Mr. Smith had installed a new gate post on the sportsfield and thanked him for a job well done. Mr. Smith will be submitting an invoice for this work.

Action: M. Smith

Environment

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items concerning the Environment Sub-Committee.

- **Lammas riverbank trees**

The Clerk said that Mrs. McCash had arranged for Herts Tree Care to visit the Lammas on 12th December. They will inspect the large Poplar trees on the riverbank opposite 19 Lammas Road (i.e. Mrs. Brenda Marshall's address) and provide a quotation for the work required.

It was agreed to ask Sodexho to provide a quotation for the work.

Action: J. Allsop/H. McCash

- **Lammas land-management**

Mr. Stock said that he contacted Peter Garrett, of the Countryside Management Service (CMS), to seek his advice and assistance re the immediate and long-term management of the Lammas. Mr. Garrett was very interested and agreed to help.

Mr. Stock said that he, Mr. Poulton and Mrs. Dinnin met with Peter Garrett on site to discuss the current situation and the way forward. Mr. Garrett has agreed to prepare a 5-to-10 year management plan for the Lammas. A first draft will be available in January 2004. In addition for the need for provisional contract labour, it is hoped that some of the work can be done by voluntary labour (e.g. CMS volunteer days).

In the short-term the Lammas would benefit from some strimming and tidying-up in three areas. This can be funded from this years Land Management budgetary provision of £1200.

Mrs. Dinnin to write to Mr. Welch, Mr. Brown and Mr. Monk asking them if they would contact her re providing quotations for the work required.

Action: C. Dinnin

This item to remain on the agenda.

Agenda: 01/04

b) Sportsfield

i) Report

Mr. Dunhill carried-out the sportsfield report on the 7th December 2003, the result of which is as follows.

- **Sportsfield:**

Condition of grass	Reasonable.
Litter	None.
Dog fouling	OK.
Netball posts	OK.
General	Mud on path around pavilion.

- **Children's Play Area:**

Condition of surface	OK.
Litter/Litterbin	OK? Moved?
Large swings	OK.
Small swings	OK.
See-Saw	OK.
Rainbow multi-play and slide	Fastening bolt missing?
Two spring sit-on	OK.
Teen shelter	OK.
General	Good.

- **Bike ramps area:**

Junior Jump	OK.
Double Ramp	OK.
Fun Box	OK.

- **Community Hall:**

General Condition (Exterior)	Mud on path.
Litterbin	OK.
Car Park	OK.
General	OK.

- **Multi-Purpose Play Area:**

Surface	OK. Some leaves.
Boundary Fencing	OK
Tennis nets	OK
Litter	None.
General	Leaves in drainage channels.

- **Great Innings Play Area:**

Equipment	OK.
Surfaces	OK.
Litter	None.
Dog fouling	None.
Comments	Good.

- **Allotments Area:**

Access	OK.
Condition of paths between Allotments	Good.
Condition of Allotments under cultivation	Good.
Condition of Allotments not under cultivation	Reasonable.
Litter	None.
Comments	Good.

- **Culverts on Mill Lane**

Litter and rubbish in and around Culverts	None.
Dog-fouling	None.
Comments	OK – Lammas bin full.

- **Salt bins**

Perrywood Lane	-
Entrance to Great Innings	OK.
Great Innings South – outside number 93	OK.
Station Road	-
Moorymead Close	-
Hazeldell	-

- **Dog-waste bins**

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

- **General Comment**

-

- **Missing bolt on Rainbow multi-play and slide**

Mr. Meischke said that the RoSPA playground report had identified missing bolts on this piece of equipment and they need to be replaced.

Action: J. Meischke

- **MPPA – Leaves on MPPA**

No action required at present.

- ii) **Weekly report and action**

Mr. Poulton said there was nothing to report from Ted Brown’s weekly inspections.

10 Correspondence received

a) EHDC – Summer Play Scheme

Mr. Poulton reported that EHDC had written requesting a financial contribution of between £100 and £150 towards the running costs of the 2004 Summer Playscheme (which will run for a four-week period from Monday 2nd to Friday 27th August 2004).

It was agreed to write to EHDC informing them that the free use of the Community Hall facilities represents the Parish Council’s contribution towards the 2004 Summer Play Scheme. Again, a deposit of £100 will be required from EHDC (to cover any possible damage to the building) before any booking is confirmed.

EHDC to be informed that the Parish Council will require a meeting with the play scheme leaders before the scheme starts to ensure that there is sufficient staff cover and that they are suitably qualified.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

b) The Diocese of St. Albans

The Diocese of St. Albans has written (letter dated 18th November) stating that the Board would have no objection to the grazing land being ferreted, if necessary. They ask that we first obtain permission to ferret from the tenant, Mrs Maureen Monk.

The Clerk said that a letter was sent to Mrs. Monk on 4th December, to which we have not yet received a reply.

Ferretting to be placed on the agenda under Environment Sub-Committee, for the Parish Council meeting to be held on 14th January 2004. **Agenda 01/04**

c) Watton-at-Stone Youth Club – transfer of funds

Mr. Poulton said that Mrs. McCash (as Treasurer of the Watton-at-Stone Youth Club) had transferred all of the Youth Club funds (£763.47) to the Parish Council account for safe-keeping until such time that the club is reformed.

Mrs. Dinnin said that as Chairman of the Youth Club, she was both surprised and unaware that they had agreed to this action.

Youth Club funds to be placed on the agenda under Specific Items, for the Parish Council meeting to be held on 14th January 2004. **Agenda: 01/04**

d) Hertfordshire Police Authority – Policing and Community Safety – The Way Forward

• Town/Parish Council meeting with Hertfordshire Police

Mr. Filer attended the meeting with the Police on 1st December.

Unfortunately, the evening-meeting started 45 minutes later than advised and caused complaints from attendees followed by an apology from the Chief Constable, Paul Acres.

The Chief Constable opened the meeting by saying that the police alone could not make areas safe and therefore there is a real need for a partnership approach with local Town and Parish Councils.

He explained that the police force had been restructured to get more officers on the ground. There are now 128 ward-constables and the aim was to produce a total of 165.

A talk on Crack Cocaine usage followed with the explanation that its use in Hertfordshire is widespread. Crack Cocaine is usually associated with the use of other drugs and is being tackled under “Operation Crystal”. It was reported that a very large proportion of crime committed in Herts is associated with the use of Crack Cocaine and it is having a disproportionately higher affect on society than other class 'A' drugs. This problem is a high priority for the Herts Police force.

Another presentation was given on Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) which will allow police officers to get real-time information from a number of remote data bases (e.g. the Police National Computers).

A further presentation was given on the use of Police Support Officers (PCSOs), but this was rather unsatisfactory in that local councils are being asked to provide the funding (approximately £25,000 per annum). When it was explained to the Chief Constable that this was more than the annual precept of many Parish Councils his only suggestion was that perhaps adjoining Parish Councils could share the cost!

The Hertfordshire Police Authority has written to invite us to a conference on Tuesday 27th January 2004 (at Sopwell House, St. Albans) to discuss issues facing the partnership working in the future, in particular with regard to:

- community engagement
- accountability and responsiveness
- improving operation effectiveness
- modernising the police service.

Mr. Filer (the Parish Council representative to the Police Authority) said he was unable to attend the meeting. Mr. Clark said that if he is available on that date, he would attend the conference.

Mr. Clark to notify the Clerk accordingly.

Action: C. Clark

e) HCC – Annual Grant cheque

Mr. Poulton said that we have received a cheque of £1000 from HCC for the Parish Paths Partnership annual grant.

f) Letter from Robinson and Hall

Mr. Poulton said that he had been contacted by Mr. Patrick of Robinson and Hall, who act as Land Agents for the Abel Smith estate. Mr. Abel Smith is objecting to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000,

which shows both the Lammas and Watton Green as Common Land. Mr. Patrick has copied us with a letter (dated 1st December) he sent to the Countryside Agency stating that: "Both of these areas were conveyed by Mr. Abel Smith's family to the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council on 9th June 1966 for use as a village green and a public open space. Before this date they were not Common Land and therefore should not be designated as so under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000." He has also completed two Countryside Agency comment forms for Watton Green and the Lammas.

g) HCC – Consultation on relevant areas for 2005-2006 Admissions

Mr. Poulton said that HCC had copied us with the consultation on relevant areas for 2005-2006 Admissions. Watton-at-Stone pupils will be able to apply to Simon Balle, Richard Hale, The Sele and Chancy schools.

Mr. Clark to read the relevant documentation and respond if necessary.

Action: C. Clark

h) EHDC – Christmas Tree recycling scheme

EHDC had given us two notices to advertise that a Christmas Tree recycling skip is to be available for use by members of the parish, between 5 and 11 January 2004, at Watton-at-Stone Nursery. Parishioners are encouraged to use this facility.

The Clerk to place the notices on the Parish Council notice boards.

Action: J. Allsop

A notice advertising the scheme to be placed in the Parish News (see item 12 on page 12 of these minutes).

11 Reports from other Organisations

• Watton-at-Stone School Governors

Mr. Clark said that the school had now received the Performance and Assessment (PANDA) report results for the previous academic year. For the first time, this measures the "added value" given by the school. The "added value" measures the development of the pupils from the results of their Standard Assessment Tasks (SAT) result at Key Stage 1 (i.e. aged 7) compared with the (SAT) conducted at Key Stage 2 (i.e. aged 11). This is the first year that this has been available because the SAT results have only been compiled for the past four years. The results show that the school is been the equal 13th most successful primary school in Hertfordshire which is a very pleasing result.

Mr. Poulton asked what was happening about the school's request to the Parish Council for a community project for the children to be involved in. The Parish Council had suggested the development of land around the village pump. Mr. Clark said that he would investigate and report back to the Parish Council.

Action: C. Clark

• Watton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association

Mrs. Dinnin said an informal meeting between herself, Mr. Poulton and Mr. Stock took place with Mr. J. Love, Mr M. Freeman Mr. R. Thurlow (members of the Watton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association) on 3rd December. The meeting was arranged mainly to discuss improving the conservation area and how to obtain funds to achieve their aims.

The Watton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association will be applying to HCC, EHDC and the National Lottery for grants.

John Love (Chairman of the Watton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association) has requested the following.

1. Adam Welch's telephone number
2. A copy of the Allotment lease
3. The name of the person who last cut the discussed allotment area and how much they charged.

The Clerk said that she had given Mr. Love the telephone number of Adam Welch. However, because Mr. Love is currently away on holiday, she had not looked for the copy of the allotment lease in the Community Hall. She said that she believed that Jeff Skidmore strimmed the disused allotment area, however the invoice for his work in the Parish last year does not identify the cost of the work.

The Clerk to let Mr. Love see a copy of the allotment lease.

Action: J. Allsop

The Clerk to investigate further who last strimmed the discussed allotment land.

Action: J. Allsop

• Diocesan hedge at the top of Church Walk

The hedge at the top of Church Walk adjacent to the Church graveyard is badly overgrown.

The Clerk to write to the Diocesan Board asking them to cut it back as soon as possible. **Action: J. Allsop**

12 Items for Parish News

An article on the following items discussed by the Parish Council to be sent to the editor of the Parish News for inclusion in the October issue.

- Talk by Paul Rossington (EHDC) on planning issues
- Community Hall hire charge for 2004/2005
- Parish precept for 2004/2005

- Christmas Tree recycling

Mr. Filer to write the article accordingly.

Action: D. Filer

13 Accounts/Correspondence

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash

Receipts

Payments

Postage to Australia

4.01

4.01

Cheques required

WAS PCC	Donation towards running costs of Parish News	300.00
Ted Brown	37 hours work	203.50
D. R. Monk	Leaf clearance work	200.00
Sodexo	Line marking of football pitch	88.13
Sodexo	Grass cutting	371.30
J. Allsop	December salary	505.50
J. Allsop	2 months phone calls-£51/ 10 reams of copy paper £19.99	70.99
HCC	Printer/scanner/fax/copier machine	428.98
Christine Bewley	Christmas bonus	60.00
Ted Brown	Christmas bonus	60.00
J. Allsop	Christmas bonus	<u>120.00</u>
		<u>2408.40</u>

Cheques received

Ms. Baines	Allotment rent 2003/2004	5.00
HCC	PPP Annual grant	<u>1000.00</u>
		<u>1005.00</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash

Receipts

Payments

Mr. Keen – Main Hall	100.00	Harknett Lighting	176.25
Floodlighting	100.00	Cash banked at Post Office	180.00
Football Club – Main Hall	<u>10.00</u>	J. Philips – 4 weeks	20.00
	<u>210.00</u>	VAT return	<u>105.88</u>
			<u>482.13</u>

Cheques required

The Lamp Company	2 floodlighting lamps	129.25
C. Bewley	56 hours	308.00
Lock Stock and Barrel	Repair to external lock at Community Hall	70.50
M D Electrical	Investigate floodlighting problem	<u>62.98</u>
Care Group	Floor cleaning	176.25
D. Bunyan	Shut down water stopcock on sportsfield	35.25
HCC	Cleaning materials	32.53
Mimram Electrical	Repair electricity supply fault to floodlighting	235.00
G. Smith	Window cleaning	<u>56.00</u>
		<u>1105.76</u>

Cheques received

Stort Valley Housing Assoc.	Pavilion hire	16.00
Allotment & Garden Assoc.	Pavilion hire	10.50
Mrs. McGrellis	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	39.00
Mrs. Mann	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	<u>40.00</u>
		<u>105.50</u>

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

- **The meeting closed at 2150.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 14th January 2004.**