

**Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2003 at 7.15 pm**

Present:	Mr. N. Poulton (Chairman)	Mr. D. Stock (Vice-Chairman)
	Mr. C. Clark (after 7.18 pm)	Mrs. S. Davies
	Mrs. C. Dinnin	Mr. V. Dunhill
	Mr. D. Filer	Mr. I. Knight
	Mr. J. Meischke	

Mr. Poulton said that there is one urgent item that it not on the agenda. A letter has been received from Sycamore Way Residents Association. This item to be discussed after item 11, Accounts/Correspondence (on page 12 of these minutes).

**1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. McCash.

**2 Declaration of Interests**

Mrs. Davies declared an interest in the one urgent item – Letter from Sycamore Way Residents Association. Mrs. Davies will therefore leave the meeting when the item is discussed.

**3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report**

- **Thank-you letters**

Mr. Poulton said that he had received thank-you letters from Ted Brown and the Clerk for their Christmas bonuses.

**4 Minutes of the last meeting**

**a) Acceptance**

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2002**

The following amendments were made to the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2002.

- Page 4, Item 5 a, Specific Items - Ornate village sign

In the second to last sentence in the final paragraph, 'Mr. Would' should read 'Mr. Mould'.

In the final paragraph, Mrs. Manuel should read 'Mrs. Mannall'.

- Page 8, Item 6 b i, Reports - Sportsfield - Report - Footpath access along Rectory Lane

The start of the final bullet following the report, 'Mr. Davies' should read 'Mrs. Davies'.

- Page 4, Item 5 e, Specific Items - Childrens' recreation

At the Parish Council held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2003 Mrs. Davies said that she did not accept the penultimate paragraph to be a true record of what she said. She agreed to prepare a revised minute for inclusion in the minutes.

The amendment is as follows.

First sentence of the penultimate paragraph.

'Mrs. Davies asked if the bike ramps on the sportsfield were a waste of money.'

Should read:

'Mrs. Davies asked if the bike ramps on the sportsfield were no longer being used and if not was there anything we could do to make them usable or were they a waste of money and not positioned properly.'

Mrs. Dinnin 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.

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2002**

The following amendments were made to the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2002.

- Page 7, Item 7 a, Budget & Finance Sub-Committee - Precept 2003/2004

In the second line, the date '8<sup>th</sup> January 2002' should read '8<sup>th</sup> January 2003'.

- Page 7, Item 7 a, Budget & Finance Sub-Committee - Budget 2003/2004

Insert the following line after Action: D. Filer.

'It was agreed to increase the Parish Council contingency from £500 to £1,000'.

- Page 9, Item 7 a, Community Hall Trustees - Opening and closing of external toilets at Community Hall

At the end of the seventh line of the final paragraph, 'Mr. Meischke' should read 'Mrs. Davies'. Mrs. Davies 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**

- **Inspect trees removed by May Gurney & liase with Mr. Stock about any further action required**

Mr. Filer said that he had inspected the site and approximately 12 to 14 trees had been removed by May Gurney during the recent works to the Railtrack bridge. He confirmed that the trees looked as though they were all blackthorn or hawthorn and was concerned that they may not grow back.

Mr. Filer also said that the top rail of the Railtrack fencing is missing, thus making it only two-foot high. He expressed his concern that children could easily climb over the fence at this point and gain access to the railway track.

It was agreed to write to the London North East Railtrack Zone expressing our concern that the trees may not grow back and also asking them to repair the fence as a matter of urgency. **Action: D. Filer/J. Allsop**  
Mr. Filer to inspect the tree stumps in the Spring to see if there is any sign of re-growth.

**Action: D. Filer/05/03**

- **Write e-mail disclaimer**

Mr. Poulton read out the following disclaimer that Mr. Stock and he had prepared.

**Important**

‘This e-mail is confidential and intended for the use of the individual to whom it is addressed.

Any views or opinions presented are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council.’

All Parish Councillors present at the meeting accepted the wording of this disclaimer.

Mr. Stock proposed that all Parish Councillors, when sending out e-mails on the Parish Council’s behalf, use the disclaimer ahead of the message itself. Mr. Poulton seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

- **Give Conservation Society a cheque for £100**

This action point has been completed.

- **Put the Glebe Court manager’s telephone number in the Village Directory**

This action point has been completed.

- **Update and copy the Village Directory for distribution throughout the village**

This action point has been completed.

The Village Directory was distributed throughout the village with the January issue of the Parish News. Mr. Poulton said that Mr. Evens had written to inform us that there are some incorrect items in the new Village Directory.

- Art Group                                      This closed about 2 years ago.
- Carpet Bowls Club                            The Tuesday evening meeting has not been held for about three years.  
The Wednesday afternoon session is still active and starts at 2.30 pm (not 2 pm).  
The telephone number for Tony Evens, who is the contact name for the Carpet Bowls Club, is 423596 (not 830324).

It was agreed that the above amendments be included in the Parish Council article for Parish News.

**Action: D. Filer**

- **Update list of Parish Councillors in the Community Hall**

This action point is outstanding.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Submit a claim to Cornhill Insurance for all the damage done during the storm**

Mr. Meischke said that he had investigated the possibility of making a claim for the damage to the Community Hall roof and the Oak Tree on the sportsfield. However, our policy with Cornhill Insurance does not cover the damage to the tree and the price of the repair work to the Community Hall roof is lower than the excess on the policy.

It was agreed not to pursue the matter further.

- **Accept S. C. Dass quotation for work to the Memorial in the next financial year**

This action point has been completed.

This item to be placed on the agenda for the Parish Council meeting to be held in May 2003.

**Agenda: 05/03**

- **Carry-out further tidying of tree debris on Lammas**

Mr. Dunhill said that he had not completed this action point because of the recent bad weather.

Action: V. Dunhill

- **Write to Allied Breweries re Bull Public House and footpath**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to licensing authority if unsuccessful with Allied Breweries**  
This action point will only be pursued if Allied Breweries do not respond favourably to our request.
- **Write to HCC re Minerals Local Plan**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Confirm the NIC payable by the PC so that the budget can be set & the precept agreed**  
This action point has been completed.  
This item to be discussed under 6 a, Budget & Finance Sub-Committee - Approval of budget 2003/2004 (on pages 5 and 6 of these minutes).
- **Check public liability cover in the Parish Council and Community Hall insurance policies**  
This item to be discussed under 6 a, Budget & Finance Sub-Committee – Insurance Policy (on page 5 of these minutes).
- **Ask contractors to quote for strimming and mowing work in 2003 using their own equipment**  
This action point has been completed.  
Mr. Poulton said that one response had been received to date. Mr. D. R. Monk has submitted the following quotation (dated 6<sup>th</sup> January) to do the strimming and mowing work in 2003 (as per the schedule outlined on pages 7 and 8 of the Parish Council minutes dated 11<sup>th</sup> December 2002).  
£1640 – using his own equipment  
£1600 – using the Parish Council equipment  
Mr. Meischke to give the Clerk the name and address of a local contractor who has just become involved in this type of work. The Clerk to write to the contractor asking him to submit a quote for the strimming and mowing work in 2003.  
**Action: J. Meischke/ J. Allsop**
- **Ask Mr. Poulton if the Parish Council should write to EHDC to apply for litterpick grant in 2003/04**  
Mr. Poulton said that although he was confident that the Parish Council would receive a litterpick grant for the financial year 2003/04, there would be no harm in writing to EHDC. The Clerk said she had written to EHDC requesting a grant.
- **Renewal of Annual membership for SLCC**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Accept Mr. M. Taylor's quotation**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Study the insurance policy re the Trustees indemnity**  
This item to be discussed under 6 a, Budget & Finance Sub-Committee – Insurance Policy (on page 5 of these minutes).
- **Discuss with Mr. Poulton opening and closing of toilets**  
This item to be discussed under 6 a, Community Hall Trustees - Opening and closing of toilets at Community Hall (on page 6 of these minutes).
- **RoSPA playarea safety inspection – clarify certain points contained in the report**  
Mr. Meischke said that certain points need to be clarified before the report can be presented to the Parish Council.  
**Action: J. Meischke**
- **Write to Mr. & Mrs Wilson re contractor using sportsfield to gain access to hedge**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Send statement and copy of Byelaws - Watton Green and the Lammas**  
Refer to item 6a, Environment Sub-Committee - Byelaws - Watton Green and the Lammas (on pages 6 and 7 of these minutes).
- **Put rabbit-problem letters on circulation**  
This action point has been completed.  
Refer to item 6a, Environment Sub-Committee - Rabbits on Allotments (on page 7 of these minutes).
- **Write to EHDC re Gt. Innings playarea notice board**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to EHDC re planning application for Windrush, Whempstead**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to EHDC re planning application for 2 Motts Close**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to Planning Inspectorate re planning appeal for 119 High Street**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write re 68 Hazeldell and Station Road – land adjacent to boundary fence**

This action point has been completed.

- **Place Internet services literature on circulation**

This action point has been completed.

- **Attend Crime and Disorder training opportunity**

Mr. Filer said that he and the Clerk will attend the Crime and Disorder training session on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2003.

- **Write to NSPCC re request for financial support**

This action point has been completed.

- **Put ‘EHDC – Sale of agricultural land in small plots within the district’ letter on circulation**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write the article for the Parish News**

This action point has been completed.

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

- **Install dog-fouling-penalty signs on allotments**

This item to be discussed under 5 d, Specific Items - Public footpath sign at Glebe Court (on pages 4 and 5 of these minutes).

- **Traffic-calming issues at Whempstead**

Mr. Clark said that a letter had now been sent to Ms. Val Weaver (Assistant District Manager, Hertfordshire Highways) concerning the traffic-calming issues in Whempstead. An acknowledgment of receipt has been received. The letter was also copied to PC Dave Firman (Hertfordshire Constabulary).

- **Liase with Police authority re traffic-calming issues at Whempstead**

This item was reported on under the above item.

## 5 Specific Items

### a) Ornate village sign

Mrs. Dinnin said that Mrs. McCash had agreed to chase Mr. Mould for the quotations for making the ornate village sign. Mrs. McCash spoke to the Clerk this morning and informed her that she was chasing the matter.

Mrs. Dinnin said that she would liase with Mrs McCash to obtain the quotation from Mr. Mould.

**Action: C. Dinnin/H. McCash**

### b) Ownership of footpath adjacent to Bull Public House

The Clerk wrote to Allied Breweries on 3<sup>rd</sup> January to say that we understand that the land is in their ownership, and because the footpath is in a bad state of repair could they please repair it as soon as possible before someone gets injured.

As agreed at the Parish Council meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2002, if an early response is not forthcoming, we will write to the Stevenage licensing authority to inform them of the situation and ask them what action can be taken.

**Action: J. Allsop**

### c) Ownership of the access to the Parish Council land situated between 48 and 50 Rivershill

The Clerk said that she had visited Mr. Shaw at the Land Registry, and he found the relevant maps. He said that the strip of land that allows access to the Parish-Council-owned land is registered to Sherwood Homes.

Mr. Shaw informed the Clerk that if the Parish Council maintains its land via this access for a period of 12 years, then it can apply to the Land Registry for possessionary title (which may then be granted absolute after 15 years).

The Clerk was given a copy of the Land Registry’s Practice Advice leaflet number 15 on Adverse Possession. After discussion by Parish Councillors, it was agreed that the leaflet be put on circulation for comment.

It was agreed that this item be placed on the agenda for discussion by the new Parish Council in May.

**Agenda: 5/03**

**d) Public-footpath sign at Glebe Court**

Mr. Meischke said this action point remains outstanding because, when he inspected the site on Sunday, the public-footpath sign at Glebe Court had still not been reinstated. Mr. Poulton said that when he visited the site on Monday the sign had been reinstated.

Mr. Meischke to install one of the dog-fouling-penalty signs on the public-footpath sign at Glebe Court. He will discuss with allotment holders where they would like the other sign sited, and then install it accordingly.

**Action: J. Meischke**

This item can now be removed from the agenda.

**e) Repair to damaged surface of footpath near barrier on footpath leading to Church Lane**

Mrs. McCash was not present at the meeting to report on this item.

This item to remain on the agenda.

**Action: H. McCash**

**f) Trees overhanging the entrance to the allotments**

The Clerk said that she had written to the owners of 122 High Street (whose garden backs onto the entrance to the allotments) to request that the trees be cut back. However, she did not know whether or not they had been cut back.

The Clerk to visit the site. If the trees have not been cut back, she will write again to the owners of 122 High Street.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**g) 117-121 High Street – new illuminated fascia sign**

Mr. Poulton read out a letter from EHDC (dated 11<sup>th</sup> December) to the owners of the Happy Garden take-away food shop. The letter stated that planning permission was needed for the illuminated sign, and it is unlikely that the application would be approved if submitted.

This item to remain on the agenda until it has been resolved.

**Agenda: 02/03**

Mr. Dunhill said that the wall-mounted streetlight over the illuminated sign is not working. He agreed to give the number of the streetlight to the Clerk so the light can be reported as not working.

**Action: V. Dunhill/J. Allsop**

**h) Walkern Road – flooding**

Mrs. Dinnin said that she had asked for this item to be placed on the agenda because of the recent flooding that had taken place on the Walkern Road, causing it to be closed to traffic. The flooding was caused by the culvert between the by-pass bridge and the River Beane bridge being blocked by debris (which included a gas canister, ladder and a large piece of corrugated metal), all of which has now been removed. The area affected was just north of the Walkern Road/Beane Road junction up to Beane Cottage, which is adjacent to the River Beane bridge.

A brief discussion then took place on the problem of the dumping of rubbish by members of the public who do not choose to dispose of it in the correct manner.

Mrs. Dinnin said that during the flooding it was evident that the water was not draining easily off the Walkern Road and back into the River Beane, thus leaving the area flooded. She visited the site with the Clerk and noted that if the height of the footpath was lowered to road level at the wheelchair-access point, and the adjacent grassed area had the top surface lowered, the water would then drain easily from Walkern Road and minimise the risk of flooding. It was agreed that although the culvert has now been cleared, it is likely to get blocked again in the future.

It was agreed to write to the Highways Authority requesting a site visit to discuss the option of lowering the footpath and the adjacent grassed-area.

**Action: C. Dinnin/J. Allsop**

**6 Reports****a) Sub-Committees****Budget & Finance**

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

**• Insurance policies**

Mr. Filer read out sections 5, Public Liability, and section 9, Personal Accident Definitions, from the Community Hall Trustees policy.

The Clerk said that she had mislaid the details for the Parish Council policy. She therefore agreed to obtain a copy of this information from Cornhill Insurance.

**Action: J. Allsop**

When the replacement documents have been received, Mr. Filer and Mr. Meischke to study the Parish Council and Community Hall policies re Public Liability cover and the Trustees indemnity.

Action: D. Filer/J. Meischke

- **Approval of budget 2003/2004**

The Clerk left the meeting while further changes to her salary were discussed.

Mr. Filer said that the National Insurance contributions had now been confirmed. Because the National Insurance level has increased by 1%, the Clerk's salary for the financial year commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003 will be increased from the £6421 agreed at the December Parish Council meeting to £6450.

The 2003/04-budget figure for the Clerk's salary will therefore be £6980 (which includes the National Insurance contributions payable by the Parish Council, and a Christmas bonus).

Mr. Filer proposed that the 2003/04-budget figures for the Community Hall and the revised 2003/04-budget figures for the Parish Council be accepted. Mr. Meischke seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

See attached

- **Precept 2002/2003**

Mr. Filer said that the precept forms need to be completed and returned to EHDC.

Mr. Meischke proposed that the Parish Council agree the precept (of £22,165, as discussed under Approval of budget 2003/04 above) and that the forms be duly completed and returned to EHDC.

Mr. Dunhill seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: D. Filer/J. Allsop

- **9-monthly statement of accounts for the Parish Council and Community Hall**

Mr. Filer said that the bank statement for the Community Hall only arrived this morning and therefore the Clerk had not had time to complete the 9-monthly statement of accounts.

These will be copied to all Parish Councillors prior to the Parish Council meeting to be held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2003.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Quotation for cutting the sportsfield grass in 2003**

Sodexo Land Technology has submitted a quotation of £632 (plus VAT) to cut the sportsfield grass during the 2003 season. This is an increase of £18.45 (plus VAT) on last year's price. The quotation is on same basis as in previous years (i.e. 20 flexible cuts, plus strimming around the perimeter of the sportsfield).

Mr. Poulton 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. Stock seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

## Community Hall Trustees

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

- **Opening and closing of toilets at Community Hall**

Mr. Meischke said that, following the Parish Council meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> December, he had checked the opening and closing of the toilets on a daily-basis up to the end of the school term (they are kept permanently closed during the school holidays). Although he had locked the toilets in the evenings, he discovered that they had been unlocked again later the same night. Because the person who was re-opening the toilets at night has not been identified, Mr. Bunyan was instructed to fit additional chubb locks to the outside toilet-doors. This has now been done and currently the doors are permanently locked.

Mr. Meischke said that it was not acceptable that Mark Lewis should continue with the weekday unlocking duties at the Community Hall because he is only 16 years old and undue peer-pressure could be put on him to keep the doors unlocked at night. Mrs. Davies expressed the view that Mark had been put in a position that was too much pressure for his age. Mr. Stock noted that hirers of the Community Hall must be over 21 years of age and therefore any person carrying-out the un-locking duties should be of a similar age.

Mr. Meischke agreed to speak to Mrs. V. Ansell to find out if she would be willing to carry-out the unlocking duties and ask Mark Lewis to return his key (after having explained the reasons to him).

Action: J. Meischke

## Recreation & Amenities

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

- **RoSPA – Playarea safety inspection**

This item was discussed under 4 a, Review of Actions - RoSPA playarea safety inspection – clarify certain points contained in the report (on page 3 of these minutes).

## Environment

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

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

Mr. Stock said that the two copies of the final printed version of the byelaws, together with a signed statement that they are a true printed copy of the byelaw confirmed by the Secretary of State on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2002 had now been sent to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Mr. Stock and Mr. Meischke to discuss how to display the byelaws on-site at Watton Green and the Lammas.

**Action: D. Stock/J. Meischke**

- **Rabbits on Allotments**

Mr. Stock said that he had now received comments from Parish Councillors on the four letters that he had put on high-speed circulation. The general feeling expressed by Parish Councillors was that we do nothing. However, Mr. stock said that he agreed with Mr. Dunhill's suggestion that the brambles on the disused allotments could be cut back to reduce the rabbit problem.

Mr. Poulton said that allotment-holder Mr. Love (10 Beane Road) had asked for a map of the allotments as he had lost his original copy.

Mrs. Davies suggested that the Parish Council encourage the disused allotments to be cultivated. She also said that maybe the pupils at Watton Primary School could cultivate the land.

Mr. Stock suggested that the best course of action was for Parish Councillors to have a site meeting to see what would be involved in clearing some or all of the unused allotments. Mr. Poulton suggested that the site meeting could involve the authors of the four letters. This was agreed and it was suggest that meeting stake place on a Saturday afternoon.

The Clerk to determine a suitable date and inform Parish Councillors accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

## b) Sportsfield

### i) Report

Mr. Filer carried-out the sportsfield report on the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2003, the result of which is as follows.

- **Sportsfield:**

Condition of grass	Very soft and muddy.
Litter	None.
Dog fouling	Lid missing on dog-waste bin (Church Walk).
Netball posts	OK.
General	Lots of molehills near MPPA.

- **Children's Playground:**

Condition of surface	OK (but see small swings).
Litter/Litter bin	Empty.
Large swings	Two locked together.
Small swings	OK – but poor repair on surface.
See-Saw	OK.
Rainbow multi-play and slide	OK.
Two spring sit-on	OK (surface repairs good).
Teen shelter	OK.
General	OK.

- **Bike ramps area:**

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

- **Community Hall:**

General Condition (Exterior)	OK, but some mud on top windows.
Litter bin	Empty.
Car Park	Clean and tidy.
General	Good.

- **Multi-Purpose Play Area:**

Surface	Good condition.
Boundary Fencing	OK.
Tennis nets	Both looking fairly new.
Litter	None.
General	Very good.

- **Great Innings Play Area:**

Equipment	Good condition.
Surfaces	Grass growing through mats under swings.
Litter	OK.

Dog fouling  
Comments

None.  
Most mats have grass growing through.

• **Allotments Area:**

Access  
Entrance from Church Lane broken.  
Condition of paths between Allotments  
Good.  
Condition of Allotments under cultivation  
Good.  
Condition of Allotments not under cultivation  
Overgrown.  
Litter  
Very little litter.  
Comments  
Quite good condition.

• **Culverts on Mill Lane**

Litter and rubbish in and around Culverts  
Some litter (beer cans etc).  
Dog-fouling  
None.  
Comments  
See above.

• **Salt bins**

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

• **Dog-waste bins**

Footpath 17  
OK.  
Sportsfield  
OK.  
Church Walk  
Top lid is missing.  
Walkern Road  
OK.  
Station Road  
Top lid is missing.  
High Street (by Memorial)  
Fairly full.  
Great Innings  
OK.  
Mill Lane  
Fairly full.

• **General Comments**

Missing lids and full bins could become unpleasant.

• **Moles on sportsfield**

It was agreed to ask Fred Burnell to deal with the mole problem on the sportsfield. **Action: J. Allsop**

• **Padlock between swings**

Mr. Filer said that two of the large swings were padlocked together. Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke agreed to investigate. **Action: N. Poulton/ J. Meischke**

• **Matting under play equipment on the Great Innings Playarea**

Mr. Filer said that grass is growing through the safety matting under the play equipment on the Great Innings playarea and is particularly bad under the swings.

EHDC to be notified about the problem and asked to carry-out any action required. **Action: J. Allsop**

ii) **Weekly report and action**

The Clerk said that she had not carried-out any of the weekly reports over the past month.

Mr. Poulton then asked the Clerk if she wanted to continue to do the weekly inspections. She said that she would rather not do them for the time being. Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke agreed to take turns in doing the weekly inspections.

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

## 7 Planning

### a) Applications

i) **High Mast, roundabout junction of, A602 & A119 Nr. Watton-at-Stone**

To replace the existing 14m central lighting column with a 17.1m duplicate lighting structure housing 3 no. antennae behind a GRP shroud together with an equipment cabinet on the south east edge of the roundabout at the junction of A602 and A119 nr Watton-at-Stone

All Parish Councillors were given a copy (prior to the meeting) of Hutchinson 3G's supporting statement, which forms part of the application.

After discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council objects to the amended application for the following reasons.

- The application does not show conclusively that there is no spare capacity on exiting nearby masts. No reference has been made to the possible sharing of two good sites in the locality, which are at Bardolphs Farm (which is very close to the site proposed) and Gregory's Farm.
- The siting of the proposed equipment cabinet is in a very dangerous location. The site has a history of accidents, so much so that the brick wall on the edge of the Abel Smith Estate was repositioned to improve the line of sight to help to reduce the amount of accidents (e.g. including vehicles crashing into the wall). Contractors would be put in a position of great risk when they visit the equipment cabinet at the suggested location.

A letter to be sent to EHDC's planning department accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**ii) 118 Hazeldell**

Extension at first floor level

Mr. Stock said that he had spoken to the residents of the adjacent property. He also presented the plans at a recent meeting of the Conservation Society. Because no objections were raised and the application was in keeping with the street scene, Mr. Stock had instructed the Clerk to write to the Planning Department stating that the Parish Council had no comment on this application.

Parish Councillors agreed with the decision.

**b) Decisions**

**i) The Old Chapel, Whempstead**

Alteration to include ground floor and 1<sup>st</sup> floor extension

-EHDC permission granted

**8 Correspondence received**

**a) Hertfordshire Constabulary – Awareness of your local ward constable**

All Parish Councillors had been given a copy of the Hertfordshire Constabulary letter dated December 2002, which advises us of the following.

Our local Ward Constable is: PC John Ivens  
 Working from the Community Team in: Hertford  
 The Community Team telephone number is: 01992 533062.

**b) Hertfordshire Police Authority – Priorities for policing Hertfordshire**

This item has been on circulation to all Parish Councillors. Mr. Poulton said that Mr. Filer had commented that there are no specific targets mentioned, so how do they measure success? Mrs Davies had also made the comment 'very broad'.

It was agreed to write to the Hertfordshire Police Authority thanking them for copying us with the proposed priorities for policing in Hertfordshire for the two years commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003. However, the Parish Council to comment as follows, 'when no specific targets have been identified, how does the Hertfordshire Police Authority expect to measure its successes and failures?'

**Action: J. Allsop**

**c) EHDC – Off-street car parking study**

This item has completed circulation and some Parish Councillors had indicated that they would like to respond to the off-street car parking study. Mr. Poulton said that Parish Councillors should complete the questionnaire on an individual basis because a response from the Parish Council would not be appropriate. To save on paper and photocopying, the Clerk then asked which Parish Councillors would like a copy of the questionnaire. Mr. Stock, Mrs. Davies, Mr. Knight and Mr. Meischke asked for copies. Mrs McCash (who was not present at the meeting) also to be given a copy.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**d) Information Commissioner – Freedom of Information act 2000 – publication schemes**

The Information Commissioner has written (letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> December) to advise us that they have accepted our Parish Council Model Scheme with Options. This will be in force from 28<sup>th</sup> February 2003 to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2007. During this period we will be obliged, under section 19 (1) (b), to publish information in accordance with the Model Scheme. The Information Commissioner will write to us 5 months before the end of the period because we will be required to adopt a revised Model Scheme.

**e) CDA for Herts Rural Social Inclusion Forum – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2003 at Benington Village Hall**

Mr. Poulton asked if any Parish Councillor would be able to attend the CDA meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> March. Mr. Poulton agreed to represent the Parish Council at the meeting.

The Clerk to inform CDA accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**f) Adam Smith – Skate Ramps**

Mr. Poulton read out an undated dated from Adam Smith (a teenager of 17 High Street) stating that he had researched the possible purchase of a skateboarding ramp for the village, and enclosed a price list from Transitions Skate Ramps. Adam asks the Parish Council to consider purchasing one of the small mini ramps for the village.

Mr. Poulton then read out his reply dated 18<sup>th</sup> December 2002.

‘Many thanks for your letter regarding skateboarding ramps in the village and for the information you have provided.

Unfortunately it isn’t just the matter of providing a ramp but also the land on where to erect it plus the tarmac around these ramps so they have a solid base and surround in order for them to be used.

At the present moment the Parish Council does not have any funds available for providing such a facility.

On the good news I know that the District Council is proposing to construct a large skateboarding facility at Hartham by the pool area. I know that this is some way to travel but, shortly, there will be a facility near by.

I will, however, ensure your letter is raised at the next Parish Council, which is to be held in the New Year, and if there is any other information the Council raises at that meeting a further letter will be sent to you.

Many thanks for taking the time to write.’

Mr. Stock said that he had noted that there is a wooden bike-ramp structure positioned against EMM Décor’s metal fence. He expressed his concern that if any of the youngsters accidentally went over the top of the ramp they could injure (e.g. impale) themselves on the top of the metal fence. It was agreed to write to Elaine Turner and Paul Devine, of Hockerill (whose children both have licences to use part of the Lammas for biking), asking them to re-site the structure within the designated area defined by the Parish Council.

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

**g) Go East – Renewable energy and the planning system**

All Parish Councillors had been given a copy of this document and were asked to complete and return it to Mr. Poulton. Mr. Filer agreed to amalgamate the comments received into one response. **Action: D. Filer**

**9 Reports from other Organisations**

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

Mr. Stock reported on the following items concerning the Conservation Society.

- **Millennium Walk**

The official opening of the Millennium Walk took place on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2003. Mr. Stock said that when he and Mr. Dunhill were erecting way-markers for the walk, they discussed the general condition of some of the Parish-Council-owned trees on the Lammas riverbank.

He suggested, and it was agreed, that after the meeting on the allotments (refer to item 6 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Rabbits on Allotment, on page 7 of these minutes) Parish Councillors should visit the Lammas to inspect the trees so that we all have an understanding of the significance of the responsibility that the Parish Council has with regard to tree maintenance in this area.

The Clerk to determine a suitable date and inform Parish Councillors accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Village Guide**

The Millennium edition of the Village Guide is now on sale in the village.

- **Public meeting - Watton Station**

Mr. Stock reminded Parish Councillors that the public meeting to discuss Watton Station and the railway service is scheduled for Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2003, starting at 8 pm, in the Community Hall. Mr. Stock again said that it would be good for our cause if as many Parish Councillors as possible could attend the meeting.

- **Watton-at-Stone Memorial Hall Management Committee**

Mrs. Dinnin allowed Mr. Filer to give this report in his capacity as Trustee of the Watton-at-Stone Memorial Hall Management Committee.

Mr. Filer said that the Memorial Hall had been broken into four times over the Christmas period. Entry had been gained through various windows. The floor and walls of the hall have been covered with graffiti. Ladders were used to reach the high parts of the walls. Mr. Filer said that the police had identified some of the youngsters involved and the parents of one boy are due to visit the hall to inspect the damage. The Memorial Hall is currently closed for use and estimates for the damage are being sort, some of which are as high as £5,500. It was suggested that some of the Memorial Hall’s regular users

could approach the Parish Council with regard to the temporary use of the Community Hall facilities until the Memorial Hall has been repaired. Mr. Filer said that the work to the Memorial Hall will be carried-out as soon as possible to minimise their loss of income.

- **Watton-at-Stone Play School**

Mrs. Davies said that the lease for the Horsa Hut (the building which houses the Playschool) is up for renewal.

## 10 Items for Parish News

Articles on the following items discussed by the Parish Council to be sent to the editor of the Parish News for inclusion in the next issue.

- Incorrect details in the Village Directory
- Flood Wardens (Mr. Stock suggested that Mr. Filer discuss this item with Mr. M. Freeman, one of the Flood Wardens for Rivershill, beforehand).
- Objection to the Planning application for a High Mast at the roundabout junction of, A602 & A119.

Mr. Filer to write the articles accordingly.

**Action: D. Filer**

## 11 Accounts/Correspondence

### Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

#### Petty Cash

##### Receipts

None

##### Payments

Postage for byelaws

1.04

1.04

#### Cheques required

Conservation Society	Grant towards way markers	100.00
SLCC	Annual Subscription	54.00
Ted Brown	16 hours	84.00
T E Clark	To clear Parish Council land at Rivershill	50.00
J. Allsop	January salary	491.82
	NTL phone bill	<u>28.19</u>
		<u>808.01</u>

#### Cheques received

Mr. Cobb	Allotments rent 2002/2003	7.00
David Salthouse	Allotments rent 2002/2003	<u>7.00</u>
		<u>14.00</u>

### Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

#### Petty Cash

##### Receipts

Mr. Keen – Main Hall	46.00	Mark Lewis – 9 days work	9.00
Barry Moor – Main Hall	24.00	VAT return 11/02	<u>110.35</u>
John Murphy	12.00		<u>119.35</u>
Tennis Club	30.00		
Natalie Emus	65.00		
Denise Flack	21.00		
Floodlighting to 05/01/03	<u>350.00</u>		
	<u>468.00</u>		

#### Cheques required

David Bunyan	To supply and fit two locks	177.43
Christine Bewley	60 hours cleaning	315.00
Christine Bewley	Xmas bonus	<u>50.00</u>
		<u>542.43</u>

#### Cheques received

Badminton Club	Main Hall Hire	20.00
Dave Boddy	Main Hall hire	313.20
Tennis Club	Main Hall hire	12.00
Vicki Paskell	Pavilion hire	<u>21.00</u>
		<u>366.20</u>

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

Mrs. Davies left the meeting at 8.12 pm.

- **Sycamore Residents Association**

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter (dated 16<sup>th</sup> December 2002) from Mrs. C. Chamberlain, Director of the Sycamore Residents Association.

‘The shareholders of the above association, namely all 28 property owners in Motts Close, are currently involved in the transfer of amenity land at the rear of the Close to 12 of its residents. The attached plan highlights the land in question and also shows a very small parcel of land at the entrance of the Close. The Directors of the association handling the transfer would now like to ask the Parish Council if it would consider accepting this smaller parcel of land on a gifted basis. The land is planted with shrubs.

There would be no cost to the Parish Council with regard to the gifting of this land and it would be transferred in an agreed state.

Please would the Parish Council consider this proposal and advise the Directors in due course.’

Mr. Poulton said that if we accept the land we would be taking on another maintenance cost. Also, that the land had no value and had recently been maintained by the Highways Authority under duress. Mr. Stock said that the land was being offered in the same manner as other High Street flowerbeds that the Parish Council had accepted and maintains. Parish Councillors studied the plan and after discussion it was agreed to write to the Directors of the Sycamore Residents Association thanking them for their offer and to inform them that the Parish Council feels that it is unable to take on the commitment.

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

- **The meeting closed at 9.17 pm.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2003.**