

**Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2004**

Present:	Mr. N. Poulton (Chairman)	Mr. D. Stock (Vice-Chairman) (until 2127)
	Mr. C. Clark	Mrs. C. Dinnin
	Mr. V. Dunhill	Mr. I. Knight
	Mrs. McCash	Mr. J. Meischke
	Mr. M. Smith	

**1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Filer.

**2 Public Participation**

None.

**3 Declaration of Interests**

Mr. Smith declared a pecuniary interest in item 6 a iv, Planning Application – Blue Bury Farm, detached double garage with storage (on page 5 of these minutes).

**4 Chairman's/Clerk's Report**

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

- i) Bedfordshire Playgrounds Association  
They have invited us to attend their seminar on 28<sup>th</sup> April on playground equipment and insurance.  
No Parish Councillors present were able to attend the seminar.
- ii) Terry Higgins – Village Framing  
Mr. Higgins has asked the Parish Council if he could reproduce the Parish Map on the back of a leaflet. He has produced a draft copy of the leaflet for Parish Councillors to look at.  
It was agreed that Mr. Higgins could use the Parish Map. However, we would request that item 7 on the map be changed from ‘the old pump’ to read ‘the pump’ and a footnote be added saying ‘reproduced with the kind permission of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council’.

**5 Minutes of the last meeting**

**a) Acceptance**

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2004**  
The following amendment was made to the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2004.
  - Page 2, item 4 b, Review of Actions - Contact Malcolm Amis (EHDC Arboriculturist) re Lammas trees,  
Title line,  
‘Malcolm Amis (EHDC Arboriculturist)’ should read, ‘Malcolm Amey (Arboriculturist)’.  
1<sup>st</sup> line  
Malcolm Amis’ should read, ‘Malcolm Amey’
  - Page 4 item 6 a iv, Planning Applications - 24 Rivershill  
‘Single and double storey to rear and proposed garage to replace exiting’  
should read  
‘Single and double storey to rear and proposed garage to replace existing’.
  - Page 7, item 8 a, Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee – MPPA - Vandalism  
1<sup>st</sup> paragraph after listed items, penultimate line, penultimate sentence.  
‘PC Andrew Woodward’ should read ‘PC Andrew Woodward’  
2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph after listed items, final line, final sentence.  
‘A copy of this letter is attached to these minutes.’  
should read,  
‘A copy of this letter, which highlights the problems of vandalism, is attached to these minutes.’  
‘Michelle Maunders’ should read ‘Michelle Manders’.

- Page 9, item 8 b i, Sportsfield Report – Sportsfield – Condition of grass  
‘Very worn but not suspising due to end of season’  
should read,  
‘Very worn but not surprising due to end of season’.

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

## b) Review of actions

- **Use amended self-employment letter as appropriate**  
This action point has been completed and the letters have been duly signed.  
The self-employment letters to be kept on file permanently for future use as required.
- **Order two small-swing seats from Wicksteed Leisure**  
This action point has been completed.  
Mr. Meischke to fit the new seats. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Chase Malcolm Oakman to see that the work to the floodlighting column is completed soon**  
Mr. Meischke said that he had recently spoken to Malcolm Oakman who has not yet done the work to the floodlighting column. Mr. Oakman was told my Ian Vosper (Tennis Club) that the work did not need to be done. Mr. Meischke informed Mr. Oakman that he was only to take instructions from members of the Parish Council or the Clerk, and asked him to do the work as soon as possible.  
This item to remain under review of actions. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Arrange for disclaimer notices to be made and laminated**  
This action point has been completed.  
The notices have been put up in the Community Hall.
- **Arrange for disabled-access sign to be made and laminated**  
This action point has been completed.  
The notice has been placed in one of the Community Hall windows on the car-park side of the building.
- **Chase Malcolm Amey (Arboriculturist) re Lammas trees**  
Mrs. Dinnin said that Malcolm Amey’s department does not have enough funding to allow him to visit and inspect the trees on the Lammas.  
It was agreed to ask Adam Welch to inspect them. **Action: C. Dinnin**
- **Write a letter of thanks to Val Weaver re Walkern Road drainage improvements**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Chase WAGN for a response re ticket machine at station**  
Mr. Poulton said that, during the WAGN meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> March, he and Mr. Stock were informed that the ticket machine is to be repaired and kept in its present position at Watton Station.
- **Pass information on trees that need replacing in Hazeldell to the Conservation Society**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to EHDC re planning application at 14 Beane Road**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Chase Norma Unwin re installation of station car-park sign**  
The Clerk has e-mailed Norma Unwin on numerous occasions. However, the only response received has been to say that she will chase the contractors.  
The Clerk to chase again. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Write to Mr. Mould re Ornate village sign**  
This action point has been completed.  
Refer to item 7 a, Ornate village sign (on page 5 of these minutes).
- **E-mail Valerie Weaver re Bull footpath**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to the HCC Rights of Way Department re Bull footpath**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Pay Lubbock Fine’s invoice**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Meet with Rose Brown re cleaning job at Community Hall**  
This action point has been completed.  
Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall Trustees - Employment of cleaner (on page 7 of these minutes).

- **Write letter of thanks to Christine Bewley**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Remove barbed-wire from top of the MPPA fencing**  
Mr. Meischke said that the Tennis Club had removed the barbed-wire from the top of the MPPA fencing. Mr. Poulton asked Mr. Knight to convey the Parish Council's thanks to the Tennis Club for doing this job.  

**Action: I. Knight**
- **Have additional keys cut for external cupboard and outside toilets**  
Mr. Meischke said that he had not had any keys cut because nobody had requested them.  
Mr. Knight said that key members of the Sports and Social Club do require copies and he would liaise with Mr. Meischke about the numbers required.  

**Action: I. Knight/J. Meischke**
- **Accept Doe's Sports quotation for the repair to the MPPA surface**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Submit claim to Cornhill insurance for damage to MPPA**  
Mr. Meischke said that a claim form had been received. However, it would be sometime before all the repair work is done to the MPPA and the form completed.  
This item to remain on the agenda under Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee. 

**Agenda: 05/04**
- **Contact Diocesan Board re skate-boarding facilities on sportsfield land we lease from them**  
Mr. Knight has been in contact with the Diocesan Board and it appears that they would have no objections to anything we wish to do on the land, provided that it is in agreement with the local planning authority. Also, when the land is returned to the Diocesan Board after the lease runs out, the land must be returned to its original state (i.e. grass only, with all other structures removed).  
Mr. Poulton suggested that we form a sub-committee to discuss a way forward. This was agreed. He said that EHDC is hoping to install an 'all singing all dancing' skateboard facility at Hartham Common. The cost of the project is estimated at between £250,000 - £300,000.  
Parish Councillors are to meet on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2004 (at 1930 pm at the Community Hal) to discuss the subject further and identify members of the sub-committee.
- **Contact Wicksteed Leisure re quotation for installation of hard surface under bike (skateboard) ramps**  
Mr. Meischke said that he was due to meet Wicksteed Leisure on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup>, however he would have to reschedule this meeting.  

**Action: J. Meischke**
- **Accept Mr. Monk's quotation for pressure washing**  
This action point has been completed.  
Refer to item 8 a, Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee - Pressure washing (on page 8 of these minutes).
- **Accept Adam Welch's quotation for 7 days work on the Lammas**  
This action point has been completed.  
Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Clearance work on the Lammas and Watton Green (on page 9 of these minutes).
- **Accept Ted Brown's quotation for work on Watton Green**  
This action point has been completed.  
Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Clearance work on the Lammas and Watton Green (on page 9 of these minutes).
- **Have a new byelaw sign made to replace that vandalised on the Lammas**  
This item to be discussed under item 8 a, Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee - Signs on MPPA and Lammas (on page 8 of these minutes).
- **Check quotation from M. Stanley re installation of byelaw sign**  
The Clerk said that item 5 of Mr. Stanley's quotation dated 7<sup>th</sup> May 2003 is as follows.  
    'To erect two signs up at Lammas field £110'.  
Refer to item 8 a Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee - Signs on MPPA and Lammas (on page 8 of these minutes).
- **Arrange for the Lammas gate to be opened to allow Herts Tree Care access to the Poplar tree**  
This action point has been completed and the work to the Poplar tree done.  
Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Quotations re damaged popular tree on Lammas (on page 9 of these minutes).

- **Give Mrs. McCash and Mr. Dunhill the allotments lease**

The Clerk said that she had passed the allotments lease to Mrs. McCash. However, Mr. Dunhill had not seen the lease.

It was agreed that it was sufficient that Mrs. McCash study the lease.

- **Look at clauses in allotment lease concerning the erection of fencing**

Mrs. McCash said that she could see nothing in the lease to prevent rabbit-proof fencing being installed.

- **Keep in contact with Richard Cuthbert (HCC, Rights of Way) re stile on allotments**

Mr. Poulton was happy to report that it has been proved that there has been a stile at this location for a long time. Therefore, the stile can remain.

Richard Cuthbert is arranging for a new stile to be made, incorporating a dog-flap underneath.

This item to remain on the agenda under Environment Sub-Committee until the new stile is fitted.

**Agenda: Env**

- **Inspect the broken litterbin on the sportsfield**

Mr. Poulton said that the litterbin that was reported as broken last month does not belong to us. He said it was brought on to the site during an event held last summer and was not removed afterwards. Mr. Poulton has removed the litterbin.

- **Issue bus permits at Glebe Court on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> March**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to Hertfordshire Highways re verge damage & access to footpath on Hazeldell & copy to Mr. Phesay**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 9 b, Correspondence received, Hertfordshire Highways – damage to grass verge in Hazeldell on page 11 of these minutes).

- **Write article for Parish News**

This action point has been completed.

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

- **Open separate account for Youth Club funds**

Mrs. McCash said that the account would be opened shortly. For accounting purposes this had been delayed until after the end of the financial year, which is 5<sup>th</sup> April.

- **Produce a brief summary/assessment of the benefits and cost of having a new web site**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 7 e, Specific Items - Proposal for a new Parish Council web site (on pages 5 and 6 of these minutes).

## 6 Planning

### a) Applications

**i) 31 Station Road, Watton-at-Stone**

Erection of garage to side, with bedroom above in eaves and dormer

Mr. Poulton said that he visited the neighbouring residents and they had no objections to the application. He therefore instructed the Clerk to write to the Planning Department stating that the Parish Council had no comment on this application.

Parish Councillors looked at the plans and agreed with the decision.

**ii) Beane Cottage, Walkern Road**

Single storey extensions

Mr. Knight said that he visited the neighbouring residents (i.e. Mr. and Mrs. Graham at 15 Walkern Road, and the owners of the Waggon and Horses public house) and they had no objections to the application.

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**

**iii) Methodist Church, High Street**

Disabled ramp access and handrail

Mr. Poulton said that because it does not directly affect them, the neighbouring residents were not contacted.

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. Smith left the meeting.

**iv) Blue Bury Farm**

Detached double garage with storage

Mr. Knight said that he visited the neighbouring residents and they had no comments on the application.

Parish Councillors looked at the plans and agreed to write to EHDC informing them that the Parish Council has no objections to the application. However, it is noted that there is a large void in the roof and we would not want to see this turned into any form of living accommodation in the future.

**Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Smith returned to the meeting.

**b) Decisions**

**i) 22 Hockerill**

Change of use of amenity land residential - EHDC –Permission refused

**ii) Land adjacent to 14 Beane Road**

New 1.5 storey 5 bedroom dwelling and associated garaging - EHDC – Permission refused

**iii) The Old Post Office 130 High Street**

Internal modifications, installation of new windows to side & front elevations, rooflights to rear elevation & French doors to rear elevation - EHDC – Permission granted

**c) Appeal Decisions**

**i) 1 Hazeldell**

2 Storey Side Extension - Planning Inspectorate - Appeal dismissed

Some Parish Councillors expressed their genuine surprise and disappointment at this decision.

**7 Specific Items**

**a) Ornate village sign**

Mrs. Dinnin said that she spoke to Mr. Mould approximately two weeks ago and was informed that he hoped to finish the work soon. She will contact Mr. Mould again within the next two weeks.

**Action: C. Dinnin**

**b) Footpath adjacent to Bull public house**

There is nothing further to report on this item.

This item to remain on the agenda.

**Agenda: 05.04**

**c) Renewal of ferreting licenses**

It was agreed that the following ferreting licenses be renewed.

- Mr. R. Adams of 4 Glebe Close, Watton-at-Stone to ferret Watton Green, the allotments, the Lammas and the paddock at the far end of the Lammas.
- Mr. Wally Pressland, 61 Cozens Road, Ware, Hertfordshire to ferret the Lammas and the allotments.
- Mr. S.D. Winser of 16 Tanners Way, Hunsdon, Nr. Ware to ferret the wooded part of Watton Green adjacent to Brambles.

Mr. Poulton to sign the agreements and the Clerk to act accordingly.

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

**d) Renewal of Licence for Temporary Access across the Land known as the "Old Cottage Site", at Watton Green**

It was agreed to renew the license for Temporary Access across the Land known as the "Old Cottage Site", at Watton Green, issued to Mr. Denis E. Filer (of Brambles, Watton Green). **Action: N. Poulton/J. Allsop**

**e) Proposal for a new Parish Council web site**

Prior to the meeting, Mr. Dunhill e-mailed the following to all Parish Councillors.

**‘Parish Council Web Site**

The Government’s Quality Town and Parish Council initiatives have been discussed by the Parish Council and the decision made not to pursue Quality Status.

The initiative does encompass a number of issues that are relevant to the Parish Council, for example, the Freedom of Information Act.

It would seem appropriate that the Parish Council is seen to be making reasonable efforts to convey parish matters to the public over and above the three notice boards and a contribution to Parish News

The web site currently used by the Parish Council [www.watton-pc.freemove.co.uk](http://www.watton-pc.freemove.co.uk) is a free site with email [clerk@watton-pc.freemove.co.uk](mailto:clerk@watton-pc.freemove.co.uk). In reality, this provides a link to the main body of the text, which resides on my personal NTL web space. This is purely for convenience and ease of upload of data. Recently the Clerk has enabled an email address [wattonpc@ntlworld.com](mailto:wattonpc@ntlworld.com) on her own email account as an address for "official" emails as this is more convenient to use than the freemove address. It does raise the question in the longer term of what happens when a new clerk is appointed.

The Parish Council is also registered with The Local Channel and has an embryo presence there. I do find updating this site cumbersome and not particularly user friendly.

**Web Domain Name Registration**

Typical costs per year for domain name registration are

.gov.uk	£49.50	
.co.uk	£2.00	
.org, .net	£9.00	A number of suitable name are available.

**Hosting service**

Web hosting charges vary depending on type of activity needed on the site (e.g. complex providing ordering type data) and the level of traffic (no of hits per month).

A typical level appropriate for Parish Council use would cost

£10 setup cost plus £6.00 + VAT per month. A number of suppliers offer service with similar pricing structures.

This compares with the Vision ICT charges of £200 setup plus £80 per year (£6.50 per month) as advertised in the Clerk's Magazine.

**Site Maintenance**

The sites offer a number of pages that can be updated without specialist software as well as the ability to create pages. A number of email addresses are available with forwarding facilities – for example, each councillor could have a PC email address that was redirected to their own address.'

After discussion, it was agreed that we remain with our present web site. However, it was agreed that Mr. Dunhill updates our existing site.

**Action: V. Dunhill**

**f) Mobile speed-warning equipment**

Mr. Clark said that he had collected the mobile speed-warning equipment from Hertford Police Station and was instructed on how to use it. The equipment is on loan to us for two weeks, but this could be extended. Two fluorescent-yellow jackets and a list of instructions on how to use the equipment have also been given to us.

The equipment must be set for the actual speed limit applicable to any given road, because it is illegal to set it at a lower limit. He was disappointed about this because the national speed-limit of 60 mph applies throughout the Whempstead area.

It was agreed that Mr. Clark uses the mobile speed-warning equipment in Whempstead on a weekday during the rush hour and also during a weekend. Mr. Clark to pass the equipment to Mrs. McCash who volunteered to operate it in Station Road. Mr. Smith will then do the same in Walkern Road with the help of either Mr. Knight or the Clerk.

**Action: C. Clark/H. McCash/M. Smith/I/ Knight/J. Allsop**

Mr. Poulton thanked the Parish Councillors who volunteered to use the mobile speed-warning equipment.

This to be placed on the agenda for the Parish Council meeting to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2004. **Agenda: 6/04**

**g) Discussion re Chairman and Vice-Chairman**

Mr. Poulton said that it was with regret that he had received the following letter from Mr. Stock.

'I am writing to you because the subject of Chairman and Vice Chairman is on the agenda for the Parish Council meeting to be held on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> April.

As you are aware, this item is the result of comments made by Denis (during the 2003 Annual Meeting of the Parish Council) concerning the role and ambitions of a Vice Chairman. Although I do not agree fully with his views on the matter, I do not wish to make the situation difficult or uncomfortable for anyone by continuing as Vice Chairman.

Therefore, it is with very much regret that I now inform you that I will not seek re-election to the office of Vice Chairman of the Parish Council during our Annual Meeting in May.

I have enjoyed working with you so closely over the years and I gain a great deal of satisfaction from what we have achieved as a team. My time as Vice Chairman and acting Chairman (in your absence) has been a very rewarding period in many different ways.

As in the past, I shall always be happy to assist and support you in anyway that I can.'

None of the Parish Councillors present supported the idea that a Vice-Chairman of this Parish Council must become, or have the desire to become, its Chairman. Notwithstanding this, and in response a direct question and positive comments made by Parish Councillors about his time in office as Vice-Chairman, Mr. Stock said that he felt that he could not, in all fairness, change his mind or withdraw his letter.

The role and the ambitions of a Vice-Chairman were discussed further by Parish Councillors and it was agreed by all present that in an ideal world a Vice-Chairman would progress to become Chairman. However, it was also agreed that in a Parish Council environment this is not always possible because Parish Councillors have their own changing commitments at home and in the work place and are often not able to make such long-term commitments.

The Parish Council is to formally agree and adopt a policy with regard to the role and expectations of its Vice-Chairmen.

**Agenda: Annual Meeting 5/04**

## 8 Reports

### a) Sub-Committees

#### Budget & Finance

In the absence of Mr. Filer, Mr. Poulton reported on the following items concerning the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee.

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

Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors were given a copy of the statement of accounts for the year ending the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004.

Mr. Poulton went through various items concerning the statements. He said that there had been an increase in expenditure on both sets of accounts. However, this is offset in the Community Hall accounts by an increased income. In the Parish Council accounts, a donation received in April 2002 (of £2,500 from Watton-at-Stone Mayfayre) off-sets part of the £3500 cost of the ornate village sign.

It was agreed that a summary 12-monthly statement of accounts for the Parish Council and for the Community Hall be issued at the Annual Parish Meeting.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Internal and external audit of Parish Council and Community Hall accounts**

Mrs. McCash left the meeting while this item was discussed.

After discussion the following re-appointments were made.

- Mr. Jim Morrissey to do the internal audit of the Parish Council accounts
- McCash and Hay to do the audit for the Community Hall accounts.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

Mrs. McCash returned to the meeting.

- **CPRE – Membership renewal**

Mr. Poulton proposed that the Parish Council renew its CPRE membership. The annual subscription for 2004/05 remains at £25. Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **EHDC – National non-domestic rate bill**

EHDC has set the 2004/05 rateable value for the Community Hall at £4104.00. The amount now payable, after 80% relief (applicable under charitable status), is £820.80; an increase of £21.60 on last year. The first payment of £82.80 is due on 15/04/2004, followed by nine instalments of £82.00 from 15/05/04 to 15/01/05.

- **Insurance premium for Community Hall**

We have now received the annual renewal of the Community Hall policy, which is £2040.06 for the period starting 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004. The budget figure for 2004/2005 is £1900. The premium has now been paid to Cornhill Insurance.

### Community Hall Trustees

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

- **Employment of Cleaner**

Rose Brown is now providing her cleaning service at the Community Hall. Mr. Meischke said that he was very happy with the work she had done to date. However, we need to keep the situation under review with regard to the number of hours required because she has started work at the end of the dirty-season (i.e. the football season has ended).

- **Car park spaces for disabled persons**

This item was raised at the Parish Council meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> February and then deferred for discussion at this meeting.

Parish Councillors discussed the need for disabled parking and whether or not, under new legislation, we are obliged to provide such facilities. It was agreed that Mr. Poulton speak to the Disability Discrimination Officer at EHDC to seek advise on the subject. **Action: N. Poulton**

**Recreation & Amenities**

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

- **Vandalism on the MPPA**

Mr. Knight said that, apart from two kicker-boards being ripped off, no other acts of vandalism had occurred recently. The two kicker-boards have been refitted.

Mr. Poulton said that last night an 18-year-old borrowed the keys to the MPPA from the Clerk. The Clerk phoned Mr. Poulton to ask what the age restriction was on issuing the MPPA keys to individuals. (The Community Hall requires hirers to be over 21 years.) After discussion, it was agreed that any person over the age of 18 years could borrow the key to the MPPA. Those below that age must be accompanied by an adult.

Mr. Knight suggested that John Phillips could be asked to open and close the MPPA on weekdays so that we could start to make the MPPA more available to the public.

However, during discussions, it was agreed that there was little point in having the courts opened during the week because most (if not all) of the youngsters would be at school. It was therefore agreed to ask Mr. Phillips if he would be willing to open and close the MPPA on Saturdays and Sundays.

Mr. Knight to act accordingly.

**Action: I. Knight**

- **Pressure washing**

Mr. Meischke said that he had asked Derek Monk to postpone the pressure washing around the Community Hall and MPPA areas until the footballers have finished using the facilities.

This item to remain on the agenda.

**Agenda: 05/04**

- **RoSPA inspection**

During the Parish Council meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> December (refer to item 9 a, Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee - RoSPA safety inspection, page 8 of those minutes), Mr. Meischke reported that there were several discrepancies in RoSPA's report and he had written to them asking for a corrected report.

Mr. Meischke said that RoSPA had now provided us with a corrected report.

- **Sportsfield grass cutting**

Mr. Poulton e-mailed all Parish Councillors regarding a letter received from Sodexho in which they stated that their quotation of 2nd December 2003 for grass cutting at £651 (plus VAT) was wrongly priced and that the figure should be £135.93 (plus VAT) per cut. Sodexho has always based its quotation on approximately 20 cuts a year, plus strimming work on four occasions. On this basis, the new price is an increase of over £2,000.

Frank Cooper and Son provided the following quotation (dated 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004) for cutting the sportsfield grass

‘To gang mowing the sportsfield leaving the arisings to disperse on site once a fortnight	
	Per cut      £35.00 plus VAT
To strimming around the play equipment and various obstacles four times per year.	
	Per cut      £40.00 plus VAT’

Mr. Poulton was pleased to report that he had managed to persuade Sodexho to honour its original quotation.

It was agreed to write to Frank Cooper and Son thanking them for their quotation and informing them that Sodexho has agreed to honour its original quotation. However, we will be asking Frank Cooper and Son to submit a quotation for grass cutting for the 2005 season. **Action: J. Allsop**

Grass cutting to be placed on the agenda for the Parish Council meeting to be held on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2004.

**Agenda: 10/04**

- **Sportsfield hedge**

Mr. Poulton said that Dr. Norden had contacted him about the condition of the sportsfield hedge in School Lane, which is very untidy and has large gaps in it.

It was agreed that Hawthorn should be planted in the gaps during the autumn planting-season.

The Clerk to notify Dr Norden accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

This item to be placed on the agenda for October 2004.

**Agenda: 10/04**

- **Signs on MPPA and Lammas**

Mr. Meischke said that he is arranging to have new signs made (by Sign Link Visual) for the Lammas byelaws and the MPPA at a cost of £80 plus VAT each. The quality of the sign for the Lammas will be the same as before. However, the MPPA sign is to be upgraded to that of the Lammas sign.

- **Swings seats**

This item was discussed under 5 b, Review of Actions - Order two small-swing seats from Wicksteed Leisure (on page 2 of these minutes).

## Environment

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

- **Land-management**

- **Clearance work on the Lammas and Watton Green**

Ted Brown has completed his clearance work on the Lammas, which has made a huge improvement to the look of the area.

The culverts are clear, however a systemic weed killer (glyphosate) needs to be applied to the weeds which were trimmed in the culverts.

Mr. Smith said that he would provide and apply the weed killer free of charge. **Action: M. Smith**

Adam Welch has completed the 7-days clearance work for £1000. However, there is a lot of rubbish still on site.

It was agreed that any Parish Councillors available should meet on site on 19<sup>th</sup> April at 1700 to clear the rubbish into the ditch and then burn it.

**Note:** Mr. Poulton and Mrs. Dinnin did the clearance work on 19<sup>th</sup> April.

Ted Brown expects to start the clearance work on Watton Green within the next few days.

- **Grant application towards work on the Lammas**

Mr. Poulton said that although we had not heard officially from EHDC re our application for a £500 'LEAF' grant towards the clearance work on the Lammas, he was able to confirm that we have been awarded the grant.

This grant will pay for the 3.5 days additional clearance work on the Lammas to be done by Adam Welch.

- **Byelaw sign on the Lammas**

This item was discussed under 8 a, Recreation & Amenities Sub-Committee - Signs on MPPA and Lammas (on page 8 of these minutes)

- **Quotations re damaged popular tree on Lammas**

During the recent storms, damage was done to another Poplar tree on the Lammas adjacent to the one that has recently had tree surgery.

Whilst they were on site, Mr. Poulton and Mr. Stock asked Herts Tree Care to provide a quotation to make the tree safe. However, they have failed to do so, in spite of being telephoned on two occasions.

Mrs. Dinnin read out the following quotation dated 5<sup>th</sup> April from Adam Welch.

'I write with my quotation for work to be carried-out on the Lammas as requested.

Broken limbs to be removed, splintered ends to be tidied and dead wood removed - £245.

I am happy to chip the brushwood in order to continue the path of wood chippings along the riverside of the Lammas, as well as deliver the logs to 'Windrush', Whempstead at no extra cot.

Although you only asked for a quotation for the recently and heavily damaged tree, I had noticed minor damage to the adjacent trees which I will gladly rectify, also free of charge.'

Mrs. McCash proposed that we accept Mr. Welch's quotation. Mrs. Dinnin seconded the motion and all present were in favour. **Action: C. Dinnin**

Mrs. Dinnin to ask Mr. Welch to inspect the Oak trees on the Lammas bank. **Action: C. Dinnin**

- **Ferretting on the allotments**

We have not received any response from Mr. and Mrs. Papa regarding our letter of 4<sup>th</sup> February concerning ferretting their land that backs onto the allotments.

Mrs. Dinnin said that the Allotment and Garden Association is confident that the installation of rabbit-proof fencing would prevent the rabbits on Mr. and Mrs. Papa's land coming onto the allotments.

- **Stile on Allotments**

This item was discussed under 5 b, Review of Actions - Keep in contact with Richard Cuthbert (HCC, Rights of Way) re stile on allotments (on page 4 of these minutes).

**b) Sportsfield**

**i) Report**

Mr. Poulton carried-out the sportsfield report on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 2004, the result of which is as follows.

- **Sportsfield:**

Condition of grass	Fairly Good.
Litter	None.
Dog fouling	Both empty and no fouling.
Netball posts	Good.
General	Good.
- **Children’s Play Area:**

Condition of surface	Good.
Litter/Litterbin	None and empty.
Large swings	Good.
Small swings	Good.
See-Saw	Good.
Rainbow multi-play and slide	Good.
Two spring sit-on	Good.
Teen shelter	Good.
General	Good.
- **Bike ramps area:**

Junior Jump	Good.
Double Ramp	Good.
Fun Box	Good.
- **Community Hall:**

General Condition (Exterior)	End missing off guttering at car park end by sportsfield.
Litterbin	Empty.
Car Park	Good.
- **Multi-Purpose Play Area:**

Surface	Good.
Boundary Fencing	Good.
Tennis nets	Good.
Litter	None.
General	Good.
- **Great Innings Play Area:**

Equipment	Good.
Surfaces	Good.
Litter	None.
Dog fouling	None.
Comments	Good.
- **Allotments Area:**

Access	Good.
Condition of paths between Allotments	Good.
Condition of Allotments under cultivation	Good.
Condition of Allotments not under cultivation	Good.
Litter	None.
Comments	No.
- **Culverts on Mill Lane**

Litter and rubbish in and around Culverts	None.
Dog-fouling	None.
Comments	Excellent, good job on strimming.
- **Salt bins**

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

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

- **End-cap on Community Hall guttering**

Mr. Meischke to purchase and fit a replacement end-cap.

**Action: J. Meischke**

- ii) **Weekly report and action**

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

## 9 Correspondence received

### a) Mrs. Jolley re skate boarding on MPPA

Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors were given a copy of letters from Mrs. Jolley (dated 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004) and Denis Filer (dated 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004).

In response to Mrs. Jolleys's letter of complaint about our article (in the April issue of the Parish News) concerning vandalism on the MPPA, it was agreed to publish the text suggested by Mr. Filer (see item 11, Items for Parish News - Text from Mr. Filer's letter dated 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004, on page 12 of these minutes), with one small alteration.

'could damage the MPPA' be changed to 'will damage the MPPA'.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

### b) Hertfordshire Highways – damage to grass verge in Hazeldell

The following letter (dated 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2004) has been received from Valerie Weaver (Hertfordshire Highways)

Re: Hazeldell, Watton-at-Stone – Damage to grass verge

Thank you for your letter dated 15<sup>th</sup> March 2004 regarding the above.

I have produced a works order for the scheme as agreed and it has been slotted into the earliest available month of May 2004 programme of works.'

Mr. Stock said that he had written to Ms. Weaver stating that her rapid response to this problem is much appreciated by the Parish Council. He has also kept Mr. Phesay informed.

### c) Watton-at-Stone Primary and Nursery School

Lisa Mannall (Headteacher, Watton-at-Stone Primary and Nursery School) wrote on 8<sup>th</sup> March concerning the vandalism on the MPPA and asking if the surface is safe for use by her pupils.

Mr. Poulton has replied to Mrs. Mannall informing her that the Parish Council is calling in contractors to repair the holes to the surface and asks that, if the children need to use this area in the meantime, extra care be taken. However, we feel that the damage is unlikely to cause any injury to anyone using the facility.

### d) Cornhill Insurance re burglary at Community Hall

Cornhill Insurance wrote on 1<sup>st</sup> April to inform us that they are awaiting a copy of the security warranty in order to deal with the claim. They will contact us again when they have received this from the underwriters

## 10 Reports from other Organisations

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

Because Mr. Stock was unable to attend the Watton-at-Stone Conservation Society's AGM, Mr. Dunhill reported on the meeting.

Mrs. Knight has resigned as secretary to the Conservation Society. Peter Knight remains Chairman.

There are now very few members left and nobody is willing to take on officer-roles.

The main items discussed at the AGM were the intention to replace trees in Hazeldell and looking after the footpaths in and around the village.

- **Watton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association**

Mrs. Dinnin said that all allotment holders, with the exception of Jim Hall, had signed and returned their tenancy agreements.

Mr. Freeman has been trying to obtain public liability insurance for allotment holders. However, the firm he has been dealing with requires fire extinguishers to be placed on site. Parish Councillors agreed that it

would not be practical to provide fire extinguishers on the allotments. Mr. Freeman has agreed to investigate this item further.

It was suggested that we write to all allotment holders thanking them for signing their Allotment Tenancy Agreements and stating that in future all new allotment holders will be required to sign this agreement. Mr. Stock said that he felt this to be totally unnecessary because we had already informed everyone (in writing) that new allotment holders will be required to sign the agreement. It was therefore agreed to do nothing.

Mrs. Dinnin agreed to inspect the Allotments site with Mr. Love.

**Action: C. Dinnin**

The Allotment and Garden Association started to cut back the hedge at Kimberley but were threatened by the owner. Malcolm Amey (Arboriculturist) has said that the Allotment and Garden Association are within their rights to cut back the hedge.

**Note:** The law states that you can cut back branches etc. that are overhanging your property, however you should give the cuttings back to the owner.

Bob Thurlow has expressed his concern that the Community Hall toilets are not open for use by allotment holders.

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter (dated 14<sup>th</sup> April) from John Love (Chairman, Allotment and Garden Association).

‘At our last meeting I was asked by to provide a draft notice to discourage dog owners in particular from crossing the allotment area from the public right of way to Church Walk. The notices would be placed at either end of the public right of way. Such notices might also provide the Association with some cover to back up our public liability insurance. It would be useful if the notice could be issued under the name of the Parish Council as landlords of the area.

**Notice:**

‘The allotment Field, with the exception of the public Right of Way, is private land.

The Right of Way runs from the Glebe Court gate to the stile at the Southeastern boundary.

There is not public access to Church Walk from the Right of Way.’

After discussion, it was agreed to write to John Love informing him that the Parish Council agree to the wording of the notice contained in his letter of 14<sup>th</sup> April. Also, that the notice can be issued under the name of the Parish Council, however the Allotment and Garden Association to be responsible for the purchase and erection of the notices.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **River Beane Restoration Association**

Mr. Knight said that the River Beane Restoration Association will be meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> May in the Community Hall to discuss their concerns that plans to close down the pumping station at Whitehall (as promised), and move it to Goldings, have been put on hold.

Representatives from Waterford, Stapleford, Aston and Walkern will be present. He also hoped that members of the Watton-at-Stone Conservation Society would attend.

Mr. Knight asked if the Community Hall facilities could be made available to the River Beane Restoration Association free of charge. It was agreed that if we were to provide facilities free of charge, it would be unfair to other worthy organisations that have to pay. In the past, the Parish Council has made a small donation of £10 to the River Beane Restoration Association.

- **Watton-at-Stone Sports and Social Club**

Mr. Meischke asked Mr. Knight to report on any items concerning the Sports and Social Club.

Mr. Knight said that they are currently investigating the cost of grass seeding and the maintenance of the sportsfield.

Mr. Stock left the meeting.

In its 2004/2005 budget the Parish Council has allocated funds to help Sports and Social Club projects such as sportsfield maintenance.

The Cricket Club is to keep and repair the old roller.

Mr. Knight (in his Sports and Social Club capacity) was asked to inform the Cricket Club that the Parish Council requires them to move the roller to the Cricket Shed as soon as possible.

**Action: I. Knight**

## 11 Items for Parish News

The following item to be sent to the editor of the Parish News for inclusion in the next issue.

- **Text from Mr. Filer’s letter dated 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004.**

‘There has been a complaint that in the last Parish Council report in the Parish News, the Council, in referring to the vandalism in the Multi Purpose Play Area (MPPA), appeared to blame skateboarders.

The Parish Council has debated this and believes that there has been a misunderstanding of the phraseology used – it was never the intention to apportion blame to any group. However, it was recognised that skateboarding will damage the MPPA and therefore the Parish Council unanimously decided to ban this activity on the MPPA. The Parish Council does recognise the need to provide a facility for skateboarders and is looking at the provision of a suitable site'

The Clerk to act accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

## 12 Accounts/Correspondence

### Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

#### Petty Cash

#### Receipts

None

#### Payments

None

#### Cheques required

Glyn Mould	RE Ornate village sign	1750.00
Ted Brown	32 hours litterpick	176.00
Diocesan Board	Sportsfield glebe rent	90.00
Herts Tree care	Work to Poplar Tree	564.00
Adam Welch	7 days clearance work on the Lammas	1000.00
EHDC	Maintenance and emptying of 2 dog-waste bins	192.25
Inland Revenue	Tax and NI	156.27
J. Allsop	April salary	519.27
Ted Brown	32 hours litterpick	76.00
D. R. Monk	Flowerbed maintenance work in the High Street	80.00
HCC	Lighting energy charges for 1/01/0-4 – 31/03/04	89.59
HCC	Lighting maintenance charges for 1/01/0-4 – 31/03/04	<u>189.74</u>
		<u>4883.12</u>

#### Cheques received

None

### Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

#### Petty Cash

#### Receipts

Mr. Keen – Main Hall	110.00	J. Phillips	35.00
Floodlighting - 6.01.03	200.00	Padlock, keys and chain for MPPA	48.02
N. Stichbury – Main Hall	<u>40.00</u>	Keys to external toilet	<u>7.00</u>
	<u>350.00</u>		<u>90.02</u>

#### Cheques required

Mimram Electrical	Repair outside lights	84.60
Lock Stock and Barrel	Work to lock on external toilets	58.75
Wicksteed Leisure	2 cradle swing seats	191.25
Three Valleys Water	Water supply	100.28
P. J. Roofing	Repair to rood caused by storm damage	99.88
Rose Brown	13 Hours cleaning	71.50
Cornhill Insurance	Annual premium	<u>2040.00</u>
		<u>2646.26</u>

#### Cheques received

Mrs. East	Pavilion hire	21.00
Mrs. Gilbey	Main Hall	80.00
Carole Moore	Main Hall hire	16.00
Badminton Club	Main Hall hire	180.00
Dave Boddy	Main Hall hire	324.00
Mrs. Charleston-Astall	Pavilion hire	<u>63.00</u>
		<u>684.00</u>

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

- The meeting closed at 2132.
- The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> May April 2004.