

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 10th March 2004

Present:	Mr. D. Stock (Vice-Chairman)	Mrs. C. Dinnin
	Mr. V. Dunhill	Mr. D. Filer
	Mr. I. Knight	Mrs. H. McCash (until 2150)
	Mr. J. Meischke	Mr. M. Smith

Public: None.

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Stock took the chair.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Poulton and Mr. Clark.

2 Public Participation

None.

3 Declaration of Interests

Mr. Knight declared a personal interest in item 6 a i, Planning Application – Land adjacent to 14 Beane Road, New 1.5 storey 5 bedroom dwelling and associated garaging (on page 4 of these minutes) and signed the members interest book.

Mrs. Dinnin declared a non-prejudicial interest in item 6 a i, Planning Application – Land adjacent to 14 Beane Road, New 1.5 storey 5 bedroom dwelling and associated garaging (on page 4 of these minutes) and signed the members interest book.

Mr. Dunhill declared a personal interest in item 6 a iii, Planning Application – 24 Rivershill, Single and double storey to rear and proposed garage to replace existing (on pages 4 and 5 of these minutes) and signed the members interest book.

Although she is not covered by the code of conduct, the Clerk declared an interest in item 6 a i, Planning Application – Land adjacent to 14 Beane Road, New 1.5 storey 5 bedroom dwelling and associated garaging (on page 4 of these minutes) and signed the members interest book.

4 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

None.

5 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11th February 2004**
Mr. Filer proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Vice-Chairman as a true record.
Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present at that meeting were in favour.

b) Review of actions

- **Contact Helen about clause 5 of self-employment letter**
This action point has been completed.
Mr. Stock said that Mrs. McCash had confirmed that clause 5 shall comprise the following wording.
‘You are free to determine the hours which you work, to ensure the allocated work is completed.’
The following text shall be added as the final paragraph.
‘Full Parish Council agreement must be obtained before any other amendments to our agreement are made.’
Mr. Meischke to use amended self-employment letter as appropriate. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Meet with Mr. Mould to discuss ornate village sign**
This item to be discussed under 7 a, Specific Items - Ornate village sign (on page 5 of these minutes).
- **Accept Mr. Stanley’s quotation for grass cutting on the Lammas and Watton Green**
This action point has been completed.
- **Obtain a quotation from Wicksteed Leisure for the supply and installation of two small-swing seats**
The following e-mail was received from Wicksteed Leisure on 2nd March.
‘Further to your earlier request I confirm that the current price for Rubber Cradle seats is £75.00 each. The product code is 5901.020 and the delivery time is 3-5 working days. The current carriage charge is 8.5%.
Please note all prices are subject to VAT.’

After discussion, Mr. Filer proposed that new seats be purchased. Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Attend 2004 Inter Parish Conference**

Mr. Stock said that he and Mr. Poulton went to the 2004 Inter Parish Conference (hosted by Bengeo Rural Parish Council), which was well-attended.

The main topics were 'The Licensing Act 2003' and Anti-Social Behaviour'. Literature on the licensing act is currently on circulation (none was available from the Anti-Social Behaviour presentation).

- **Chase Valerie Weaver for progress on footpath adjacent to Bull public house**

This item to be discussed under 7 b, Specific Items - Footpath adjacent to Bull public house (on page 5 of these minutes).

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

Mr. Dunhill said that this action point will be completed before the Parish Council meeting to be held on 14th April 2004.

Action: V. Dunhill/Agenda: 04/04

- **Give Parish Councillors copy of proposal for increase in contribution to the Parish News**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 8 a, Budget & Finance Sub-Committee - Parish Council contribution to the Parish News (on page 6 of these minutes).

- **Investigate why one of the floodlights is out**

Mr. Meischke said that Malcolm Oakman (Mimram Electrical) dropped one of the fuses down the lighting column whilst trying to repair it.

Mr. Meischke to see that the work is completed soon.

Action: J. Meischke

- **Inform Cornhill Insurance that a large metal plate has been fitted to door**

This action point has been completed.

- **Return insurance claim**

This action point has been completed. Cornhill Insurance has acknowledged our letter and noted its contents.

- **Find out wording used by EHDC for disclaimer notices**

Mr. Meischke said that Mr. Poulton had the approval of the EHDC Solicitor for the following wording.

'Personal property is brought onto these premises at the owner's risk.

The Parish Council will not be responsible for theft, damage or any other loss unless caused by our negligence.'

It was agreed to remove the wording:

'unless caused by our negligence'.

Mr. Meischke to arrange for disclaimer notices to be made and the Clerk to have them laminated.

Action: J. Meischke/ J. Allsop

(Interestingly, EHDC premises such as Wodson Park do not have disclaimer notices.)

Mr. Meischke produced a disabled-access sign, which it was agreed should be laminated and displayed in the Community Hall.

Action: J. Meischke/ J. Allsop

Parish Councillors were reminded that it was agreed at our meeting held on 11th February that the subject of car park spaces for disabled persons be placed on the agenda for the Parish Council meeting to be held on 14th April 2004.

Agenda: CH 04/04

- **Order and then display disclaimer notices**

This item was discussed with the above item.

- **Pay invoice submitted by Blue Bury Farm Contractors**

This action point has been completed.

- **Accept Ted Brown's quotation for work on the Lammas**

This action point has been completed.

- **Contact Malcolm Amis (EHDC Arboriculturist) re Lammas trees**

Mrs. Dinnin has left a message for Malcolm Amis to contact her and is waiting a response.

Mrs. Dinnin to chase.

Action: C. Dinnin

- **Meet on Lammas and Watton Green re land management tasks**

This item to be discussed under 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Lammas land-management (on page 8 of these minutes).

- **Remind Mr. P. Knight to contact Mrs. Dinnin as soon as possible re Scout volunteer help**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 8 a Environment Sub-Committee - Environmental project for Scouts and Cubs 2004/05 (on page 8 of these minutes).

- **Accept Adam Welch's quotation for grass cutting and strimming works**
This action point has been completed.
- **Notify Mr. Adams about ferreting Churchyard**
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to Valerie Weaver re gully on Walkern Road and for a progress report on the installation of a larger grill**

The Clerk sent the following e-mail to Valerie Waver (Hertfordshire Highways) on 2nd March.

'I e-mailed you on 1st February re the ditch on the Walkern Road. Could you please have this cleaned out at both ends i.e. where it enters the drain and where it exits.

The Parish Council also needs an update on when we can expect a larger grille to be installed.'

The following response was received on 3rd March.

'Thank you for your e-mail, the existing grille will be cleared while we are undertaking the drainage works in Walkern Road. I think the railings have proved their worth over this winter by collecting significant amounts of debris, thus stopping the culvert from blocking.

However, we will not be installing a new grille, as the existing railings seem to be doing a good job at collecting debris and I still believe this is a Land Drainage issue on private land and not Hertfordshire Highways. All the funds I had have gone on improving the gullies as requested to get the water off the carriageway.

With regards to the exit end of the ditch, this is on private land and I need to investigate our access rights first.

The remaining part of the works is to have the existing culvert jetted through so that everything will be up and running ready for next winter and I will look into the exit ditch as requested.'

Mrs. Dinnin said that she and the Clerk had inspected the area and it was looking good. Hertfordshire Highways have installed numerous drain holes to improve the drainage problem on Walkern Road.

It was agreed to write a letter of thanks to Valerie Weaver for arranging the improvements to be made.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Contact Wilf Emsley re disposal of roller**
Mr. Meischke said that he had spoken to Wilf Emsley about the disposal of the roller on the sportsfield. Mr. Emsley would be happy to have it disposed of but needs the approval of the Cricket Club first.
Mr. Smith said that he has offered to dispose of the roller for £20.
Mr. Meischke said that if Mr. Smith is unable to do the work, he would remove it for nothing.
- **Arrange for repair of tennis net**
This action point has been completed.
- **Contact EHDC re the emptying of the dog waste bin on footpath 17**
This action point has been completed.
- **Give donation of £100 to Allotment and Garden Association**
This action point has been completed.
- **Send letters to John Love and Allotment holders who have not returned their agreements**
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to WAGN re ticket machine**
This action point has been completed.
The Clerk to chase WAGN for a response. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Write to Hertfordshire Highways re Mr. Phesay's letter concerning footway works**
This action point has been completed.
Refer to item 9 d, Correspondence received - Hertfordshire Highways – Hazeldell – verge damage and access to footpath (on page 10 of these minutes).
- **Reply to Mr. Phesay's letter concerning footway works**
This action point has been completed.
- **Try to attend the Chairman's Civic Service on 25th April 2004**
Mr. Filer said that unfortunately he would not be able to attend the Chairman's Civic Service on 25th April 2004.
- **Write article for Parish News**
This action point has been completed.

c) Action points outstanding for more than two months

• Contact Mr. Stock re location of trees that need replacing in Hazeldell

Mr. Stock said that he and Mrs. McCash had identified the need for replacement trees outside the following properties.

- 93/95
- 101/103 (this savaged tree needs to be removed and replaced with a new tree sited centrally on the grass verge)
- 45/47

Mr. Stock to pass this information to the Conservation Society.

Action: D. Stock

• Open separate account for Youth Club funds

Mrs. McCash said that she was still awaiting a form from Alliance & Leicester and had chased them again today.

This item to remain an action point.

Action: H. McCash

• Chase Norma Unwin re installation of station car-park sign

The Clerk e-mailed Norma Unwin on 3rd March to find out when the car-park sign will be installed. An e-mail response was received on 4th March saying 'Not yet but I will chase tomorrow.'

The Clerk e-mailed Norma Unwin again (on 8th March) asking for a response before our meeting, but no reply has been received.

Mr. Stock and Mr. Poulton to speak to Norma Unwin at the WAGN meeting to be held on 30th March 2004.

Action: D. Stock/N. Poulton

6 Planning

a) Applications

i) Land adjacent to 14 Beane Road

New 1.5 storey 5 bedroom dwelling and associated garaging

And letters from residents of Beane Road and Walkern Road re above planning application

Mr. Stock closed the meeting at 1940 to allow Mr. Knight to clarify certain aspects of the application.

Mr. Stock opened the meeting again at 1950.

Mr. Stock then read out extracts of letters received from the residents of 9, 11a, 12a and 15 Beane Road and 17 and 17a Walkern Road. The main concerns expressed by the residents in their letters, and as discussed at length by Parish Councillors, related to the dangerous access, the over-development of the site and that the proposed dwelling is not in keeping with other properties in the area.

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

- It is an over-development of the site, with little or no amenity land.
- Because of the restricted access to the site.
- It is not in keeping with the area or the properties within it.

Also, the Parish Council supports the six letters of objection that have been sent by the residents of 9, 11a, 12a and 15 Beane Road and 17 and 17a Walkern Road.

Because of the Clerk's involvement in this application, the letter will be from the Vice-Chairman.

Action: D. Stock

ii) The Old Post Office 130 High Street

Internal modifications, installation of new windows to side and front elevations, installation of rooflights to rear elevation and installation of French doors to rear elevation

Mr. Dunhill said that because this application is for listed buildings purpose only, he had instructed the Clerk to write to EHDC informing them that we have no comment on this application.

Parish Councillors agreed with this decision.

iii) 22 Hockerill

Change of use of amenity land to residential

Mr. Stock said that Mr. Poulton had looked at this application and because the change of use of this small piece of land did not affect anyone (and three of the neighbouring residents had no objections), the Clerk was instructed to write to EHDC informing them that we have no comment on this application.

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

iv) 24 Rivershill

Single and double storey to rear and proposed garage to replace existing

Mr. Dunhill said that the only change to this application was a gable-end on the rear of the garage. He visited the neighbouring residents and they had no objections. 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.

b) Decisions

i) Old Post Office, 130 High Street

Internal modifications, installation of new windows and French door EHDC – Permission granted

Mr. Stock pointed out that EHDC had not granted permission for the driveway. He then read out clause 5 of the decision notice dated 29th January 2004, as follows.

‘There shall be no vehicular access to the development hereby permitted from the High Street.

Reason

In the interest of highway safety.’

7 Specific Items

a) Ornate village sign

Mrs. Dinnin said that she, Mr. Stock and Mr. Meischke had had a very constructive meeting with Mr. Mould on Thursday 4th March.

She then read out the following letter, which she proposed should be sent to Mr. Mould.

‘Thank you very much for the meeting on Thursday, we felt that it was very constructive.

The Parish Council at its meeting held on Wednesday 10th March agreed to pay the balance of your invoice without further delay. Please find enclosed a cheque for £1,750, which is settlement of your invoice dated 4th December 2003.

To avoid further confusion, the current agreement between us is as follows.

1. All the paint will now be removed from the sign.
2. The sign will then be coated with a clear varnish.
3. We will then visit you again to view the sign and agree whether or not we need to add any colour tinting (i.e. to give the sign a “water-colour effect”).
4. We will collect the sign from you upon completion of the work agreed.
5. It is estimated that the price for the above work will be in the region of £300 to £400 and will be done by your colleague, who will invoice the Parish Council accordingly.

With many thanks for your co-operation in resolving this matter.’

After discussion, Mr. Stock seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: C. Dinnin

b) Footpath adjacent to Bull public house

The Clerk e-mailed Valerie Weaver (Hertfordshire Highways) and received the following e-mail response on 2nd March.

‘I have discussed the matter fully with the County Solicitor and been advised that this has to be driven by the County Councils Rights of Way department. I have wrote to them and I am currently awaiting a reply.

As soon as I hear anything on this, I will let you know.’

After discussion, it was agreed to e-mail Valerie Weaver to ask her whether or not it would help her resolve this matter if the Parish Council was to write to the HCC Rights of Way Department asking for a progress report on this footpath being dedicated as a right of way.

Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop

c) Clearance work to Parish Council land at Rivershill

Tim Clark has completed the annual clearance work required to the Parish Council land at Rivershill (for a price of £50).

8 Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

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

- **Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2003**

Mr. Filer was pleased to report that Lubbock Fine had signed the annual return for the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31st March 2003. Because no additional information was required, Lubbock Fine have submitted their invoice for £250 (plus VAT), which is the minimum fee chargeable for the size

of our Parish Council. However, this is an increase on the £120 (plus VAT) charged last year; because our income and expenditure figures exceeded £25,000.

Lubbock Fine rates for the years 2001/02 and 2002/03 are.

Level of income/expenditure	£1 - £5,000	Fee - £50
Level of income/expenditure	£5,000 - £25,000	Fee - £120
Level of income/expenditure	£25,000 - £50,000	Fee - £250
Level of income/expenditure	£50,000 - £100,000	Fee - £350

Mr. Filer proposed that Lubbock Fine's invoice be paid. Mr. Meischke seconded the motion and all present were in favour. **Action: J. Allsop**

Mrs. McCash said that, due to new legislation re money laundering and fraud checks, our audit fee may well increase substantially this year.

- **Parish Council contribution to the Parish News**

Mr. Filer e-mailed all Parish Councillors with his proposal for increasing our contribution to the Parish News from £300 to £400.

After discussion, Mr. Filer proposed that the Parish Council increases its contribution for the financial year 2004/05 to £400.

Mr. Knight said that he wanted to make a counter-proposed that we do not increase our contribution immediately because our budget has already been set and the Parish News currently has sufficient funds.

After some discussion, Mr. Stock seconded Mr. Filer's proposal and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to arrange for our contribution to be paid in the new financial year. **Action: J. Allsop**

Community Hall Trustees

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

- **Employment of Cleaner**

All Parish Councillors were sent an e-mail informing them that Christine Bewley no longer wishes to clean the Community Hall.

Mr. Meischke said three people had been interviewed with a view to providing us with a cleaning service.

Mr. Meischke proposed that Mrs. Rose Brown (Ted Brown's wife) be offered the job of cleaning the Community Hall on a self-employed basis. Mr. Stock seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Mr. Meischke said that Mrs. Brown will be asked to submit weekly/monthly timesheets, and the work is expected to take a maximum of 8 hours per week.

Mr. Meischke to meet with Mrs. Brown to discuss our requirements and arrange for her to sign the 'self-employment letter' before stating to provide us with her cleaning service. **Action: J. Meischke**

Mr. Meischke to also arrange for Ted Brown to sign the 'self-employment letter'. **Action: J. Meischke**

Mr. Stock to write a letter of thanks to Christine Bewley for her services to the Parish Council.

Action: D. Stock

- **External lighting**

Malcolm Oakman (Mimram Electrical) has repaired the external lighting at the Community Hall (for a price of £84.60, including VAT).

Mr. Oakman has also supplied the following quotation (dated 5th March).

'To supply and install mcb's in the floodlighting columns in the tennis courts.

Labour and material	£323.52'
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It was agreed at the Parish Council meeting held on 11th February 2004 not to proceed further with the installation of trip boards on the floodlighting columns. However, this quotation (which forms part of Malcolm Oakman's invoice for the repair of the external lighting) is to be kept on file for future reference.

Recreation & Amenities

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

- **Vandalism**

- **MPPA**

All Parish Councillors had been sent an e-mail about the vandalism that had taken place on the MPPA.

Approximately 40 indentations have been made in the surface of the MPPA. The damage has been done by pounding the service of the MPPA with the foot-end of the tennis posts. In addition to this, the Tennis Club has reported the following results of acts of vandalism over the past few weeks.

- One tennis net winder post broken
- one other tennis net post (no winder) broken
- one tennis net has hole burnt in it
- side gate forced
- kicker boards defaced
- broken bottles on several occasions – broken glass thrown into horse field
- Parish Council notice destroyed
- Tennis Club notices repeatedly torn down
- two instances of fires on the MPPA surface to burn drug paraphernalia.

The police have told about all the incidents and have now interviewed six youngsters from the village. Mr. Knight said that if Parish Councillors need to contact the Police, they should speak to Sgt Martin Singleton, PC John Ivens or PC Andrew Woodwood. He said that the police are willing to speak or meet with us and are being very proactive.

Mr. Meischke read out a letter dated 8th March from Mr. Knight (in his capacity as Chairman of the Tennis Club). A copy of this letter is attached to these minutes. **See attached**

After lengthy discussion, the following was agreed.

- The barbed-wire at the top of the MPPA fencing to be removed.
- The tennis posts and nets, which are currently being stored in the external cupboard, be reinstated on the MPPA.
- The MPPA to be locked with a padlock and chain.

Mr. Meischke to remove the barbed-wire from top of MPPA prior to the facility being padlocked.

Action: J. Meischke

Mr. Knight to arrange for the purchase of a chain and padlock, plus additional keys. Keys will be issued to some members of the Parish Council, the Clerk and members of the Sports and Social Club Committee.

Action: I. Knight

Mr. Knight said that Doe's Sports has submitted a quotation of £224 (plus VAT) for repairing the MPPA surface. He proposed that this quotation be accepted. Mr. Meischke seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: J. Allsop

A claim for the cost of all the repair work to be submitted to Cornhill insurance.

Action: J. Meischke/J. Allsop

Mr. Knight said that he had spoken to Michelle Maunders from the Diocesan Board to find out if they would consider allowing us to put a hard surface under and around the bike ramps on the sportsfield (these ramps are in fact more suitable for skate boarding). She told Mr. Knight that she could see no problem with this proposal, but we should write to her stating in principal what we want to do and that the project is aimed at reducing vandalism in the village.

It was agreed that Mr. Knight write to the Diocesan Board accordingly.

Action: I. Knight

Vandalism on the MPPA to be placed on the agenda for the Parish Council meeting to be held on 14th April 2004.

Agenda: 04/2004

• **Lock on external toilet**

Mr. Meischke said that vandals had removed the lock and barrel from the door of the external Gents-toilet. Lock Stock and Barrell gained access to the toilets and removed the remaining part of the lock. It was agreed that both external toilets should be locked and unlocked with the Chubb lock only and the Yale-type lock will not be replaced.

Mr. Meischke to have additional keys cut for the Chubb lock and distribute them to the different groups within the Sports and Social Club.

Action: J. Meischke

• **Pressure washing**

Mr. Meischke said that there is an excessive amount of mud around the Community Hall and on the surrounding paths. In addition, to this both of the foot-scrappers and the entrance to the MPPA are in a very muddy condition. Mr. Meischke said that he had obtained the following quotation (dated 10th March) from Derek Monk to rectify these problems.

1. Jet-wash muddy areas of tennis courts.
2. Clear mud around foot-scrappers and jet wash. One scrapper by tennis courts and one by Pavilion (Community Hall).

3. Jet-wash paved area around pavilion (Community Hall) and pavilion (Community Hall) wall up to first line of black bricks.

Amount for above work: £100

Mr. Meischke proposed that Mr. Monk's quotation be accepted. Mr. Filer seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: J. Allsop

Environment

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

- **Lammas land-management**

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

Mrs. Dinnin said that she, Mr. Poulton and Mr Filer met with Adam Welch on the Lammas to look at the clearance work that needed doing.

Adam Welch has now submitted the following quotation.

‘I write with my proposal for work to be done on the Lammas as discussed.

To clear the bank and ditch from the southern end of Mill Lane for approximately one hundred yards. Clearance to include brush, wood and brambles.

£1,000 – 7 days

£1,500 – 10.5 days’

Mr. Stock said that Mr. Poulton has submitted a grant application for £500 towards the clearance work on the Lammas to the EHDC Community Revenue Scheme (which includes LEAF).

After discussion, Mr. Filer proposed that Mr. Welch's quotation for 7 days work be accepted, and if our grant application with EHDC is successful, this should be extended to 10.5 days. Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: J. Allsop

Ted Brown has submitted a quotation of £150 for clearing the wood at Watton Green.

Mr. Filer proposed that Mr. Brown's quotation be accepted. Mrs. McCash seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: J. Allsop

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

See above.

- **Vandalism to sign on Lammas**

The byelaws sign on the Lammas has been broken by vandals and thrown in the river. Mr. Poulton retrieved the sign, which needs replacing and the post reset. The post had not been concreted into the ground and it was therefore fairly easy for the sign to be vandalised. The police have been informed.

It was not clear whether or not we had originally asked Mr. Stanley to set the posts in concrete.

The Clerk to check Mr. Stanley's quotation for the installation of byelaw sign.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Meischke to arrange for a new byelaw sign to be made.

Action: J. Meischke

- **Poplar tree on Lammas**

Herts Tree Care has been in contact with Mrs. Dinnin re the work to the Poplar tree, which they expect to do on Friday 19th March. Mrs. Dinnin to arrange for the Lammas gate to be opened on the morning that the work is to be done to enable them to bring their vehicles on site.

Action: C. Dinnin

- **Environmental project for Scouts and Cubs 2004/05**

The Watton-at-Stone Scout Group has agreed to help with the land management tasks on the Lammas and Watton Green as a local project.

During the Easter holidays, they will continue to clear any part of the wooded area of Watton Green that Ted Brown has not done. They can then continue with clearance work on the Lammas.

- **Ferreting**

- **Allotments**

Mr. and Mrs. Papa have still not responded to our letter of 4th February concerning ferreting their land that backs onto the allotments.

This item to remain on the agenda.

Action: J. Allsop

- **The Lammas**

Wally Pressland (ex EHDC pest control officer), who has a Parish Council license to ferret the Lammas, has informed Mr. Poulton that he has killed 211 rabbits since he started in October.

However, he states that rabbits are now coming from Mr. Abel Smith's land on the other side of Mill Lane.

- **Stile on Allotments**

Because the Allotment and Garden Association want rabbit-proof fencing on the disused part of the allotments, Mr. Poulton and Mr. Love met with the Rights of Way Officer (Paula Cheesman) to discuss the stile in that area. Evidently, the stile near Kimberley should not be there. Stiles are only installed where livestock graze. Richard Cuthbert (HCC, Rights of Way) said that he thought that we could change the stile to a normal gate. However any barrier at this point may not meet current regulations. The Parish Council is keen for the stile to remain because it is an ideal deterrent against motorbikes and also will assist when putting up a rabbit proof fence.

This item to remain on the agenda.

Action: J. Allsop

The Clerk to give Mrs. McCash and Mr. Dunhill the allotments lease to see if rabbit-proof fencing is permissible.

Action: J. Allsop/H/ McCash/V. Dunhill

b) Sportsfield

i) Report

Mrs Dinnin carried-out the sportsfield report on the 9th March 2004, the result of which is as follows.

- **Sportsfield:**

Condition of grass	Very worn but not suspiring due to end of season.
Litter	Good.
Dog fouling	Good.
Netball posts	OK.
General	Good for end of winter. Cricket boundary fence needs attention.

- **Children's Play Area:**

Condition of surface	Muddy.
Litter/Litterbin	OK.
Large swings	OK.
Small swings	Worn – needs new seat as before.
See-Saw	Needs oil.
Rainbow multi-play and slide	Ok needs a clean in spring.
Two spring sit-on	OK.
Teen shelter	OK
General	Good for winter.

- **Bike ramps area:**

Junior Jump	OK }.
Double Ramp	OK } but muddy.
Fun Box	OK }

- **Community Hall:**

General Condition (Exterior)	OK, path in front very muddy.
Litterbin	One broken in hedge by roller. The other OK.
Car Park	Good.
General	Good.

- **Multi-Purpose Play Area:**

Surface	Clear damage as reported by NCP – clean.
Boundary Fencing	OK. Graffiti on locked gate. Other gate difficult to open.
Tennis nets	None.
Litter	None.
General	Tidy.

- **Great Innings Play Area:**

Equipment	Good but muddy: except table and cover burnt needs painting.
Surfaces	Muddy.
Litter	Good.
Dog fouling	OK.
Comments	Very good.

- **Allotments Area:**

Access	Good.
Condition of paths between Allotments	Good.
Condition of Allotments under cultivation	Good.
Condition of Allotments not under cultivation	Better for clearance.
Litter	Good.
Comments	Fence surrounding chestnuts poor.

• **Culverts on Mill Lane**

Litter and rubbish in and around Culverts	Clear.
Dog-fouling	Good.
Comments	Ready for clearance work in April.

• **Salt bins**

Perrywood Lane	Full.
Entrance to Great Innings	Not full.
Great Innings South – outside number 93	Couldn't find it.
Station Road	Full.
Moorymead Close	Full.
Hazeldell	Full.

• **Dog-waste bins**

Footpath 17	-
Sportsfield	Full no lid.
Church Walk	Full no lid.
Walkern Road	Full.
Station Road	Full.
High Street (by Memorial)	OK.
Great Innings	OK.
Mill Lane	-

• **General Comment**

-

• **Litter bin on sportsfield**

Mr. Meischke to inspect the broken litterbin on the sportsfield and take any action required.

Action: J. Meischke

ii) **Weekly report and action**

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

9 Correspondence received

a) John Love – Three letters dated 18th and 26th February 2004

Mr. Stock read out three letters received from John Love and our two responses (dated 23rd and 26th February 2004). Copies of all these letter are attached to these minutes. It is hoped that the remaining tenancy agreements outstanding will now be signed. If not the Parish Council must consider its position further.

See attached

b) EHDC – Bulk bus permit issue 2004

Mr. Poulton and the Clerk will issue bus permits at Glebe Court on Saturday 27th March between 1400 – 1600.

Action: N. Poulton/J. Allsop

Notices have been placed around the village.

c) Boardmans Photocopying Limited – Copier meter plan charge review

Boardmans Photocopying Limited has written (letter dated 13th February 2004) to inform us that they will be increasing their Meterplan charges by 5% to take effect from March's meter reading. This is due to the general increase in costs of consumables and parts during the last year.

d) Hertfordshire Highways – Hazeldell – verge damage and access to footpath

Mr. Stock read out the following letter from Valerie Weaver (Hertfordshire Highways).

'Re: Hazeldell, Watton-at-Stone – Verge Damage and Access to Footpath

Thank you for your letter dated 13th February 2004 regarding the above matter.

I will inspect the problem this week and advise you of my findings and our proposals to resolve this situation. From the photographs provided, it looks as though 50% of the damage is caused by vehicles driving over the verge. I would be reluctant to provide even more footway area for vehicles to abuse and use as on-street parking facilities. I think the only way would be to include timber posts as well as a new section of footway.

I would be grateful for your views on the possibility of installing timber posts as an option.

Unfortunately, I cannot guarantee that any works could be carried out before the resurfacing as it is late in this year's programme to be adding extra works orders.'

After discussion, it was agreed to write to Hertfordshire Highways asking them to install a new section of footpath together with timber posts. **Action: D. Stock**

e) DEFRA – Countryside Stewardship Scheme – new payment rates for capital and access items

Mr. Stock passed this item to Mr. Dunhill.

f) Hertfordshire Highways – Footway Resurfacing – Hazeldell, Watton-at-Stone

Joseph McCarthy (Project Engineer, Hertfordshire Highways) wrote to us on 8th March to advise us that the final phase to resurface the footway areas in Hazeldell is planned to commence in April/ May 2004. The work will take one week to complete and will be done on a Monday to Friday basis between the hours of 0730 and 1830.

10 Reports from other Organisations

• Watton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association

Mr. Meischke reported that he and Mr. Poulton had attended the last meeting of the Allotment and Garden Association during which the following items were discussed.

- Apart from one member, who they have been unable to speak to, the Allotment and Garden Association has agreed to sign their individual Tenancy Agreements.
- The Allotment and Garden Association wants to form a management committee and asked the Parish Council to be part of it. The Parish Council made it clear that the allotment-management function is the responsibility of the Parish Council alone. Therefore, the Parish Council will not be part of any sub-committee formed by the Allotment and Garden Association. However, we will continue to send a Parish Councillor to the Allotment and Garden Association meetings, and is the case with other organisations in the village.
- The Allotment and Garden Association agreed to block-off all entrances from Church Walk to help avert the vandalism problems.
- The Allotment and Garden Association had discussions on spending part of their lottery grant. They intend to make a storage unit and a have a proper recycling area.

The Clerk to give Mr. Meischke and Mrs. Dinnin a list of all allotment holders. **Action: J. Allsop**

Mrs. McCash left the meeting.

• Parish Path’s Partnership

Mr. Dunhill said that the Countryside Management Services have written (letter dated 3rd March) to inform us that they are launching the Parish Path’s Partnership Training scheme in July 2004.

Mr. Dunhill has e-mailed the details to all Parish Councillors.

11 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 next issue.

- Vandalism on MPPA and the general increase of vandalism in the village
- Clearance work on the Lammass and Watton Green
- Crime Concern web site address.

Mr. Filer to write the article accordingly. **Action: D. Filer**

12 Accounts/Correspondence

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash

Receipts

Sale of 1 video

5.00
5.00

Payments

Ted Brown – 8 hours litterpick

44.00
44.00

Cheques required

Blue Bury Farm contractors	Supply, install a fix railway sleepers and gate post	613.00
Ted Brown	21 hours litterpick	115.50
Allotment & Garden Assoc.	Grant toward clearance work	100.00
J. Allsop	100 x 28p stamps	28.00
J. Allsop	March salary	505.25
T. E. Clark	Clearance work to Parish Council land at Rivershill	50.00
J. Allsop	Phone calls	25.50
Lubbock Fine	Audit for year ending 31 st March 2003	293.75
HCC	Footway lighting maintenance for 04/02 – 10/2002	280.30
HCC	Lighting energy charges for 1/10/03 – 31/12/03	89.59

HCC	Replacement lighting column (insurance claim)	<u>647.31</u>
		<u>2748.20</u>

Cheques received

Cornhill Insurance	Lighting column insurance claim	572.31
Jo Rees	Allotment rent 2003/04	<u>5.00</u>
		<u>577.31</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash

Receipts

Mr. Keen – Main Hall	105.00
Floodlighting - 6.01.03	240.00
John Murphy	26.00
N. Stichbury – Main Hall	<u>40.00</u>
	<u>411.00</u>

Payments

J. Phillips		31.00
HCC – Fire extinguisher		<u>28.61</u>
		<u>59.61</u>

Cheques required

P. J. Roofing	Repair to roof	381.88
EHDC	RoSPA playground safety inspection	72.26
C. Bewley	50 hours cleaning	275.00
G. Smith	Window cleaning	<u>56.00</u>
		<u>785.14</u>

Cheques received

Carole Moore	Main Hall hire	<u>16.00</u>
		<u>16.00</u>

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

- **The meeting closed at 2157.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 14th April 2004.**