

**Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2005**

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

Public: Mr. E. Riddle

**1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Filer.

**2 Public Participation**

None.

**3 Declaration of Interests**

None.

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

Mr. Poulton said that he had two additional items for discussion.

- i) Planning decision – The Moat House, Perrywood Lane.  
This item to be discussed under 6 b i, Planning decisions (on page 3 of these minutes).
- ii) Tree in Perrywood Lane.  
This item to be discussed under 7 g, Specific items (on page 4 of these minutes).

**5 Minutes of the last meeting**

**a) Acceptance**

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2005**  
Mr. Stock proposed that the minutes 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**

- **Amend text for the two Interpretation Boards**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Forward amended layout for the two Interpretation Boards to all Parish Councillors**  
This action point has been completed.  
Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Interpretation Boards for the Lammas – update (on page 5 of these minutes).
- **Contact DEFRA to ask for permission to erect Interpretation Boards on the Lammas**  
This action point has been completed and DEFRA has given permission.
- **Arrange for the replacement MPPA floodlighting bulbs to be fitted**  
This item to be discussed under 8 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee – MPPA – Floodlights (on page 5 of these minutes).
- **Forward all Parish Councillors Raj Goutam's e-mail re road markings and signage for School Lane**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to Mr. Clark re school coaches blocking Rectory Lane**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to planning department re 14 Watton House (with copies to Mr. Doolan & Mrs. Goldsmith)**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to planning department re 8 Lammas Road**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to planning department re 89 Great Innings North**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Write to planning department re Blue Hill Farm (with copies to M. Stanley and Mr & Mrs Vosper)**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Contact Danny Kyan re financial help for Lammas Road lighting**  
This item to be discussed under 7 a, Specific items – Lammas Road street lighting (on page 3 of these minutes).
- **Contact Raj Goutam to arrange a site meeting re Lammas Road street lighting**

This item to be discussed under 7 a, Specific items – Lammas Road street lighting (on page 3 of these minutes).

- **Write to Mrs. Wynes re Lammas road street lighting**

This action point has been completed.

- **Write to specific allotment-holders re rent outstanding**

This action point has been completed.

Refer to item 7 c, Specific items - Update on Allotments (on page 3 of these minutes).

- **Write to Police re off-roading (with a copy to Tom Goldsmith: HCC, Rights of way)**

This item to be discussed under 7 d, Specific items - E-mail from PC Andy Woodward re Motor cycle and 4-wheel drive off roading (on page 4 of these minutes).

- **Contact Turners to ask them to do the annual gas-inspection**

This action point has been completed.

- **Arrange for the Community Hall to be advertised in the new ‘Our Village’ magazine**

Mr. Meischke said that he had spoken to the Editor of the magazine and the price for a quarter-page advert is £108 for 6 months (i.e. £18 per month) and £144 for one year (i.e. £12 per month).

It was agreed not to proceed further with this item.

- **Obtain prices for both metal and plastic replacement byelaw-signs**

Mr. Meischke had obtained prices for both types of signs and the Community Hall Trustees had agreed to purchase an engraved laminated-sign at £105 plus VAT (plus post and packing). The sign should be delivered to us within the next two weeks.

- **Purchase replacement boot-scraper brushes**

Mr. Knight said that the replacement boot-scraper brushes are due to be delivered on 18<sup>th</sup> November.

Mr. Knight to fit the brushes.

**Action: I. Knight**

- **Obtain two quotations for replacing the current plastic guttering with vandal-proof guttering**

Mr. Meischke said that he had contacted three contractors. Mr. Bunyan was the only one to respond and did so with the following verbal quotation. The approximate price to supply and fit:

- 6” industrial plastic guttering = £600
- aluminium guttering = £900
- cast iron = £1300

The prices are for both sides of the lower roof only. If cast iron guttering is fitted, it would need to be painted.

On receipt, Mr. Meischke to e-mail all Parish Councillors with Mr. Bunyan’s official written-quotation.

**Action: J. Meischke**

- **Look at the feasibility and costing of installing acoustic panels in the sports hall and pavilion**

Mr. Poulton said that he is having a very slow response from potential suppliers. His initial feelings are that acoustic panels will be too expensive.

Mrs. McCash said she knows of someone who might supply acoustic panels. She will contact Mr. Poulton with the details.

**Action: H. McCash**

He agreed to report back to the Parish Council during its meeting in December.

**Action: N. Poulton**

- **Inform Mr. Filer of any items to be included in the 2006/07 budget**

Mr. Poulton reminded Parish Councillors to give any items they would like included in the 2006/07 budget to Mr. Filer as soon as possible.

- **Inspect Watton Green and the Lammas re flail cut and if the grass needs removing from site**

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Smith inspected the area and agreed that both sites needed an additional cut.

Mr. Smith said that he had now done the work, but was not able to remove the cuttings from site because of the wet ground. He has also cut back the overgrown area on the left-hand side of Watton Green.

- **Inform Mr. Dunhill of any items to be included in the Parish Paths Partnership program for 2006/07**

Mr. Dunhill did not receive any additional items and will therefore be applying to the Parish Paths Partnership program for funding for the same items as last year.

- **E-mail Trevor Waldock (EHC) re damage to Great Innings play-area slide**

This action point has been completed.

- **E-mail Hertfordshire Highways re grass bank on Perrywood Lane**

This action point has been completed.

Raj Goutam (Hertfordshire Highways) has e-mailed us as follows.

‘Thanks for your e-mail, request is noted. I have requested Ian to investigate and do the necessary. Will advise you if and when this is likely to be done.’

- **Inspect MPPA kicker boards and arrange for loose boards to be fixed**

Mr. Knight said that he had fixed the loose kicker boards.

- **Write Parish News article**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Re-send Parish News article from last month**  
This action point has been completed.
- **Contact Mr. Poulton re invitation to a Rural Housing Conference on 1<sup>st</sup> November**  
Mr. Poulton said that he attended the Rural Housing Conference (which he felt was not very interesting).

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

- **Speak to the Watton-at-Stone School Governors re school coaches blocking Rectory Lane**  
Mr. Clark said that he spoke to the School Governors in June/July of this year about coaches blocking Rectory Lane. He spoke to them again earlier this week and was informed that the coaches now backup past the school (blocking the entrance to the Coach House) but do not block Rectory Lane.  
The traffic problem in Rectory Lane continues to be a problem when parents are dropping off and collecting their children from school.
- **Arrange for photocopying machine to be serviced and obtain a spare cartridge before service contract ends**  
The Clerk said that the machine is due to be serviced next week.

**6 Planning**

**a) Applications**

None.

**b) Decisions**

**i) The Moat House, Perrywood Lane**

Telescopic pool enclosure to cover existing pool at rear of house -East Herts Council permission refused

**7 Specific items**

**a) Lammas Road street lighting**

Mr. Poulton said that he has arranged a site meeting with Raj Goutam (Hertfordshire Highways) tomorrow in Lammas Road. All Parish Councillors are welcome to attend.

The estimated cost of installing four new lighting-columns and fitting new lights to the two existing columns is £3800.

Mr. Poulton said that he had spoken with Danny Kyan (Hertfordshire Highways) who indicated that if the Parish Council budgeted for £1900 towards the cost of the new lighting, he would match that figure.

The work would not be done until summer 2006.

If the new lighting is installed in Lammas Road, Hertfordshire Highways will then take over the maintenance and electricity cost, which will give the Parish Council a small revenue-saving.

It was agreed that if the new lighting is installed in Lammas Road, we may be approached by residents in other roads throughout the village asking for their street lighting to be improved this would give the Parish Council a serious problem.

**b) Report from Stort Valley Housing Association**

Stort Valley Housing Association has now addressed all of the complaints made by Mr. Harris (Grey House, High Street). The broken fence at the rear of Mr. Harris's property has been renewed and the rubbish from the car park area cleared away. The residents who are depositing rubbish in this area will be contacted by Stort Valley Housing Association.

**c) Update on Allotments**

- **Allotment rent**  
With the exception of Mark Stewart, allotment rents have now been received from all allotment holders.  
It was agreed that we write to Mark Stewart informing him that (as per the terms and conditions of his agreement with the Parish Council) because payment was not received within 40 days of the invoice date his allotment will be allocated to someone else. **Action: J. Allsop**  
We wrote to the three allotment holders that did not appear to be cultivating their allotments. One has now given up his tenancy. The remaining two are Mark Stewart and Cath Millar.  
Cath Millar has paid her annual rent and it was therefore agreed that Mr. Meischke makes contact to inform her that the Parish Council will expect her to cultivate the allotment otherwise it will be allocated to someone else. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **No dumping sign**  
It was agreed that the Allotment and Garden Association can erect a sign to be worded as follows.

‘Disposal of rubbish and plant material is not permitted on uncultivated land or plots’

The Allotment and Garden Association to be notified accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**d) E-mail from PC Andy Woodward re motorcycle and 4-wheel drive off-roading**

Mr. Poulton read out Andy Woodward’s e-mail response (dated 2<sup>nd</sup> November) re our letter (dated 20th October) regarding the use of motorcycles and 4-wheel drive vehicles for off-roading in the area around Perrywood Lane.

‘I have received your letter dated 20th October 2005 regarding the use of motorcycles and 4-wheel drive vehicles for off-roading in the area around Perrywood Lane. I have spoken to Mr and Mrs Borlase about the problems several times over the past few months and we are aware of this problem. We have caught several off-road motorcyclists in this area and issued them with warnings under section 59 of the police reform act. The most recent of these was a few weeks ago whereby Mrs Borlase rang me on my mobile phone, told me that bikes were present and I was able to attend immediately and apprehended two youths from Harmer Green.

Patrols will continue in the future and hopefully this will help reduce the problem. We have also put signs out on some of the tracks around Perrywood Lane to warn riders that there bikes can be seized by us.

I hope this helps and I will be attending the parish council meeting in December, by which time I might have more of an update on the situation.’

**e) Litter bin – Watton Green**

The litter bin on Watton Green is missing, together with the post it was attached to and the adjacent wooden-rail barrier.

Mr. Poulton said that EHC had told him that they will make arrangements for a replacement bin to be installed.

**f) Police report**

Mr. Poulton said that PC Andy Woodward was on patrol in the village on the evening of Halloween. The evening’s events included eight stop and searches (with the confiscation various items including eggs) plus two males were arrested for attempted robbery.

**g) Tree in Perrywood Lane**

A tree in Perrywood Lane (just past the entrance to Mr Warren’s property) is leaning dangerously and is partially uprooted.

Mr. Poulton has spoken to Raj Goutam who is now establishing the ownership of the tree so that it can be removed as soon as possible.

**8 Reports**

**a) Sub-Committees**

**Budget & Finance**

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

- **Date for reviewing budget for 2006/07**

The Budget and Finance Sub-committee will meet on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November at 1915 and all Parish Councillors are welcome to attend.

**Community Hall Trustees**

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

- **Approval of minutes of meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2005**

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

- **Management of keys to the Community Hall**

Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors were issued with a copy of the Key-Holder Policy (November 2005) and the Key-Holder Agreement prepared by Mr. Stock. **See attached**

Parish Councillors formally approved both documents.

Mr. Knight to arrange for all Sports and Social Club key-holders to sign a copy of the agreement.

**Action: I. Knight**

- **Insurance claim**

Allianz Cornhill has agreed our claim for the broken windows and sent us a cheque for £387.48.

- **Condition of Community Hall after football match on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2005**

Mr. Meischke received a telephone call from Rosemary Brown on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> October about the appalling state in which the footballers had left the changing room facilities after play over the weekend. She was very upset by this.

Mr. Poulton inspected the changing room facilities (because Mr. Meischke was unable to do so) and persuaded Rosemary Brown to clean up the mess (of which she made an excellent job). Most of the problems appear to have been caused after the ladies football match held on the Sunday.

Mr. Knight agreed to raise this issue during the next Sports and Social Club meeting. He said that the football club had purchased new brushes for the changing rooms and agreed that the facilities were left in a terrible condition.

It was agreed that in future any extra hours of cleaning required because of the misuse of the Community Hall facilities shall be charged to the Sports and Social Club.

It was also agreed to formally write to the Sports and Social Club regarding the condition the Community Hall facilities were left in over the weekend of 29<sup>th</sup> /30<sup>th</sup> October. **Action: I. Knight/J. Allsop**

- **2005 Annual Return**

Mr. Poulton said that he had completed and returned the 2005 Annual Return for Community Hall and enclosed a copy of our report and accounts for that year.

## Recreation & Amenities

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

- **Sportsfield - Boot scrapers**

The boot-scraper brushes have been ordered and are due to be delivered on 18<sup>th</sup> November. Mr. Knight agreed to install them. **Action: I. Knight**

- **MPPA**

- **Netball posts**

Mr. Knight said that the Watton-at-Stone Primary School had asked if they could borrow the Parish Council netball posts. However, on inspection they were found to be in an unusable condition and beyond repair.

After discussion, the Parish Council agreed that because there is currently no netball team the posts shall be disposed of and not replaced. Mr. Meischke agreed to dispose of the posts.

**Action: J. Meischke**

- **Leaves**

Mr. Knight asked if the clearing of leaves around the MPPA could be included in Ted Brown's schedule of work to do.

Mr. Poulton agreed to ask Ted Brown to inspect the area on a regular basis and clear the leaves as and when necessary. **Action: N. Poulton**

- **Floodlights**

Unfortunately the four floodlighting bulbs scheduled for replacement had not been fitted before the start of the bad weather. They will now have to be fitted when the ground is hard enough to take the weight of a cherry picker without causing damage to the sportsfield.

Mr. Knight said that all eight floodlighting bulbs are work properly at present.

- **Dogs**

Mr. Knight said that members of the public are using the MPPA to exercise their dogs. He is aware of three recent incidents of dog-fouling on the MPPA.

- **Additional Tennis Court**

Mr. Knight said that he had not heard from Jim Smith (a parent of one of the tennis players) who agreed to prepare the final plans for submission to the EHC Planning Department.

## Environment

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

- **Grass cutting Watton Green and the Lammas**

As reported earlier, Mr. Smith has now cut the grass on Watton Green and the Lammas, leaving the cuttings on site. In addition, he has cut back the overgrown area on the left-hand side of Watton Green. Mrs. Dinnin said that both sites look very good.

- **Interpretation Boards for the Lammas – update**

The Interpretation Boards have now been ordered from Insignia (Chippenham, Wiltshire).

Mr. Poulton said that the Parish Council will need to arrange for them to be installed.

- **Environmental items to be included in 2006/07 budget**

No additional items were identified.

**b) Sportsfield**

**i) Report**

Mr. Dunhill did the sportsfield report on the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2005, the result of which is as follows.

- **Sportsfield:**
  - Condition of grass Good – muddy.
  - Litter Some.
  - Dog fouling OK.
  - Netball posts OK.
  - General -
- **Children’s Play Area:**
  - Condition of surface OK.
  - Litter/Litterbin OK.
  - Large swings OK.
  - Small swings OK.
  - See-Saw OK.
  - Rainbow multi-play and slide OK.
  - Two spring sit-on OK.
  - Teen shelter OK.
  - General Good.
- **Bike ramps area:**
  - Junior Jump OK.
  - Double Ramp OK.
  - Fun Box OK.
- **Community Hall:**
  - General Condition (Exterior) Roof tiles, car park side.
  - Litterbin Lots of litter.
  - Car Park -
  - General Mud.
- **Multi-Purpose Play Area:**
  - Surface OK, but leaves in corner.
  - Boundary Fencing ‘Loose’ post south-west corner.
  - Tennis nets OK
  - Litter None.
  - General Good/leaves.
- **Great Innings Play Area:**
  - Equipment OK.
  - Surfaces OK.
  - Litter None.
  - Dog fouling None.
  - Comments OK.
- **Allotments Area:**
  - Access OK.
  - Condition of paths between Allotments OK.
  - Condition of Allotments under cultivation OK.
  - Condition of Allotments not under cultivation OK.
  - Litter None.
  - Comments Good for time of year.
- **Culverts on Mill Lane**
  - Litter and rubbish in and around Culverts Too wet.
  - Dog-fouling None.
  - Comments Generally untidy.
- **Salt bins**
  - Perrywood Lane OK.
  - Entrance to Great Innings OK.
  - Great Innings South – outside number 93 OK.
  - Station Road OK.
  - Moorymead Close (2) OK.
  - Hazeldell OK.
  - Footpath 17 OK.

- **Dog-waste bins**
  - Footpath 17 OK.
  - Sportsfield OK.
  - Church Walk OK.
  - Walkern Road OK.
  - Station Road -
  - High Street (by Memorial) -
  - Great Innings OK.
  - Mill Lane OK.
  - Opposite 5 School Lane OK.
- **War Memorial**
  - General Comments More pebbles!
- **Ornate Village Sign**
  - General Comments OK – footpath puddle.
- **Roof tiles**
  - Mr. Dunhill said that some of the roof tiles on the car-park side, lower roof, appear to be displaced.
  - Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke to investigate. **Action: N. Poulton/J. Meischke**
- **Kicker-board post**
  - Mr. Dunhill said that one of the kicker-board posts is loose. A bracket was fixed to it, but has now rusted away. Mr. Knight agreed to inspect the post and arrange for it to be fixed. **Action: I. Knight**
- **War Memorial garden**
  - Additional pebbles are needed around the base of the War Memorial.
  - Refer to Environment Sub-Committee. **Agenda: Env**
- **Footpath adjacent to the ornate village sign**
  - The footpath adjacent to the ornate village sign is uneven and pools with water.
  - Mr. Poulton agreed to inspect the site. **Action: N. Poulton**
- **Gate to the Lammas**
  - The gate to the Lammas is not locked.
  - Mr. Smith to lock the gate. **Action: M. Smith**
- iii) **Weekly report and action**
  - Mr. Poulton said there was nothing to report from Ted Brown’s weekly inspections.

## 9 Correspondence received

No correspondence was received, but the following items arose.

- **Footpath adjacent to the Bull Public House car park**
  - This needs clearing.
  - It was agreed that the Clerk chase the Definitive Map Officer (Rights of Way, HCC) re progress on having this footpath added to the Definitive Rights of Way Map. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Remembrance Sunday**
  - Mr. Poulton said he looked forward to seeing Parish Councillors at the Remembrance Sunday service on 13<sup>th</sup> November, and afterwards for the laying of the wreaths at the War Memorial.

## 10 Reports from other Organisations

- **Watton-at-Stone Conservation Society**
  - Mr. Stock said that the Conservation Society held another public meeting with WAGN on 8<sup>th</sup> November. He said it was very embarrassing that, apart from the six people on the panel (which included one police officer and three WAGN representatives), only he and Mr. Dunhill were present. Maybe this is because their objectives have been achieved and people are happy with the service and facilities currently provided by WAGN.
  - The station is being maintained to a better standard than before, but no further improvements are likely until WAGN has confirmation that its franchise has been renewed.
  - Mr. Stock also felt that the future of the Conservation Society looked very bleak.
- **River Beane Restoration Association**
  - Mr. Knight said that Three Valleys Water were to investigate the possibility of reducing the abstraction from Whitehall by around 50% with the balance coming from at least two pumping stations further down the River Beane valley. Test boreholes for the new pumping facilities are to be drilled with testing taking place during 2006.

The River Beane water table still remains very low. When we do get rain it comes down very heavily and therefore does not replenish the water table. For the water table to increase, we need smaller amounts of rain but more often.

- **Watton-at-Stone Memorial Hall Management Committee**  
Mrs. McCash said that the Watton-at-Stone Memorial Hall Management Committee’s AGM will be held on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2005.
- **Police report**  
Mr. Poulton said that PC Andy Woodward will report on policing matters during our Parish Council meeting to be held on 14th December 2005.

**11 Items for Parish News**

None.

**12 Accounts**

**Watton-at-Stone Parish Council**

**Petty Cash**

**Receipts**

None

**Payments**

None

**Cheques required**

HCC	Lighting maintenance charges 1/7/05 – 30/9/2005	202.63
HCC	Lighting energy charges 1/7/05 – 30/9/2005	118.67
HCC	5 reams of photocopy paper	14.68
Ted Brown	32 hours litterpicking	208.00
Earl Haig	Poppy donation	65.00
J. Allsop	November salary	545.01
J. Allsop	Phone calls to 03/11/05	<u>25.00</u>
		<u>1178.99</u>

**Cheques received**

Mike Freeman	Allotment rent 2005/06	32.50
Mr. and Mrs. Hankin	Allotment rent 2005/06	6.50
Mr. Hodges	Allotment rent 2005/06	13.00
Jim Hall	Allotment rent 2005/06	13.00
Diane Whitaker	Allotment rent 2005/06	6.50
Pat Hawkins	Allotment rent 2005/06	13.00
Philip Howell	Allotment rent 2005/06	6.50
Muriel Haig-Smith	Allotment rent 2005/06	13.00
Cath Millar	Allotment rent 2005/06	6.50
		<u>110.50</u>

**Watton-at-Stone Community Hall**

**Petty Cash**

**Receipts**

Jim Keen – Main Hall	60.00	<b>Payments</b>	
Floodlighting to 24.10.09	40.00	The Lamp Company	31.73
John Murphy – Main Hall	<u>6.00</u>	Banked	<u>170.00</u>
	<u>106.00</u>		<u>201.73</u>

**Cheques required**

Gary Smith	window cleaning	56.00
Rosemary Brown	26 hours cleaning	<u>156.00</u>
	Stevenage Glass	<u>212.00</u>

**Cheques received**

Badminton Club	Main Hall hire	198.00
Allianz Cornhill	Insurance claim for broken windows	387.48
D. Boddy	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	297.00
Liz Welch	Pavilion hire	<u>48.00</u>
		<u>930.48</u>

Mrs. McCash proposed that the Parish Council approve the above payments, Mr. Meischke seconded the motion, and all present were in favour.

- **The meeting closed at 2025.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2005.**