

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 14th September 2005

Present: Mr. N. Poulton (Chariman) Mr. J. Meischke (Vice-Chairman)
 Mr. C. Clark (after 1950) Mr. V. Dunhill
 Mr. D. Filer Mr. I. Knight (after 1940)
 Mrs. H. McCash Mr. M. Smith
 Mr. D. Stock

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. Dinnin.

Mr. Clark and Mr. Knight gave apologies because they would be late in arriving at the meeting.

2 Public Participation

None.

3 Declaration of Interests

Mr. Meischke and Mr. Filer both declared a personal interest in item 6 a i, Planning applications – 66 Rivershill (on page 2 of these minutes).

4 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

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

i) Annual Return for 2004/05

This item was left of the agenda in error. Lubbock Fine have signed the Parish Council Annual Return for 2004/05 with no additional comments. He thanked Mr. Filer and the Clerk for their work in achieving this result.

ii) Planning decision

Heath Mount School, Woodhall Park - Erection of retractable pool cover -EHC permission granted

5 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

• Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 6th July 2005

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

b) Review of actions

• Write to John Love accepting quotation for strimming work on the uncultivated area of the Allotments

This action point has been completed.

• Attend the locality policing meeting on 14th June

This item to be discussed under item 7 b, Specific items – Report on Police meeting on 14th July to discuss locality policing (see page 3 of these minutes).

• Give the Clerk any Risk Assessment items not covered on list

No further Risk Assessments were identified by Parish Councillors to the Clerk.

• Update Risk Assessment list and put a copy in the Parish Council file

This action point has been completed.

• Obtain cost estimates for all long-term maintenance issues identified

This item to be discussed under item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee - Costings for all major expenditure items identified by Parish Councillor (see pages 5 and 6 of these minutes).

• Obtain the best service-providers for Gas and Electricity

Mr. Poulton said that British Gas (our previous suppliers) provided the best quotation and shall continue to provide our gas and electricity.

• Contact Mr. Smith and Sue Clarkson to find out the best way of getting rid of hogweed

This item to be discussed under item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Hogweed on the Lammas (see page 7 of these minutes).

• Inspect graffiti on bench-seat near bike ramps

Mr. Poulton said that he had removed the graffiti on the bench-seat and the bike ramps. He agreed with Mr. Stock that the graffiti was very obscene.

• Inspect the small area of surface lifting on the MPPA and take any necessary action

Mr. Poulton said that Mr. Knight had inspected the small area of surface lifting at the far end of the first court. This is an old problem caused by a thistle root and no action is required at the moment.

- **Contact Trevor Waldock (EHC) re branch stubs on the Great Innings Play Area**
Mr. Poulton said that he removed the offending branch stubs the day after the July Parish Council meeting. The Clerk said she had, as instructed, e-mailed Trevor Waldock (EHC) asking him to remove the branch stubs.
- **Chase EHC re our request for permission to remove the branch of the Oak tree overhanging the MPPA**
This item to be discussed under item 9c, Correspondence received - EHC – Application for work to Oak tree on Sportsfield (see page 10 of these minutes).
- **Write to Sara Mellor (EHC) re litterbins**
This action point has been completed.
- **Contact Lesley Crace re her e-mail about footpath stiles in the parish**
Mr. Dunhill said that he had made contact with Lesley Crace and the stiles in question are in the parish of Datchworth. However, he did contact the Rights of Way Officer about the problem stiles.
- **Forward all Parish Councillors any e-mails received concerning licensing applications**
This action point has been completed.
- **Speak to the Watton-at-Stone School Governors re school coaches blocking Rectory Lane**
Mr. Clark was not present at the meeting to discuss this matter.

Refer to item 10, Reports from other Organisations – Watton-at-Stone School Governors (on page 11 of these minutes).

c) Action points outstanding for more than two months

- **Identify major expenditure items to be considered as long-term financial commitments**
This item to be discussed under 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee - Costings for all major expenditure items identified by Parish Councillors (on pages 5 and 6 of these minutes).

6 Planning

a) Applications

i) 66 Rivershill

New freestanding double garage and conversion of existing integral garage to habitable room
Mr. Dunhill 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 agreed with the decision.

ii) Heath Mount School, Woodhall Park

Erection of retractable pool cover
Mr. Meischke inspected the plans and, because they did not affect any neighbouring residents, he instructed the Clerk to write to the Planning Department stating that the Parish Council had no comment on this application.
Parish Councillors agreed with the decision.

iii) 89 Great Innings North

Two-storey side extension
Mrs. McCash visited the neighbouring residents and they had no objections to the application. She therefore instructed the Clerk to write to the Planning Department stating that the Parish Council had no comment on this application.
Parish Councillors agreed with the decision.

iv) 42 Rivershill

New dormer window to rear elevation
Mr. Poulton inspected the plans and, because they did not affect any neighbouring residents, he instructed the Clerk to write to the Planning Department stating that the Parish Council had no comment on this application.
Parish Councillors agreed with the decision.

v) Units 8 & 11, Broom Hall Farm

Change of use from class B8 to class B2
Mr. Poulton 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 agreed with the decision.

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

Telescopic pool enclosure to cover existing pool at rear of house

Mr. Poulton said that the swimming pool enclosure would not be visible to any of the neighbouring properties or from any roads in the area (as it is situated at the rear of the property).

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

Action: J. Allsop

b) Decisions

i) **Blue Hill Farm**

Conversion of farm buildings to form 4 residential units (variation to planning permission 3/02/2405/FP)
-EHC permission granted

ii) **Land adjacent to 99 High Street**

New dwelling house and parking -EHC permission granted

Refer to item 10, Reports from Other organisations – Land adjacent to 99 High Street (on page 11 of these minutes), re discussions on this decision.

iii) **66 Rivershill**

New freestanding double garage and conversion of existing integral garage to habitable room
-EHC permission granted

c) Withdrawn

i) **14 Watton House**

1st floor extension to front and loft conversion

ii) **Land adjacent to 99 High Street**

Demolition of derelict stabling

7 Specific items

a) Lammas Road street lighting

Mr. Poulton said that during August, the Parish Council e-mailed Raj Goutam (Hertfordshire Highways) about progress on the Lammas Road street lighting. He responded on 17th August as follows.

‘Following on from my last e-mail to you, I have once again requested the Street Lighting Engineer to assess the current situation. I am informed that arrangements are being made to look at this as the current design is probably outdated and with a view to:

- a) a complete redesign and
- b) infill lighting, depending on age of column.

With respect to the timescales, I am, unfortunately, not in a position to give you these at present suffice to say that I shall monitor the situation and advise both you and Nigel as and when I have any information. I hope the above is of some help to you.’

Mr. Poulton said that because no progress had been made he had today spoken to Mr. Goutam and after discussion, it was agreed that we write as follows.

‘I refer to our numerous e-mails and conversations with regards the street lighting in Lammas Road.

Following our telephone conversation on the 14th September would you kindly instruct the street lighting engineer to carry out the following task.

Is the street lighting adequate in Lammas Road, if not what actions need to be taken to bring it up to standard, how much would it cost and who pays.

As you realise this issue has been dragging on for almost five months so an urgent response to this letter would be appreciated.’

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

b) Police meeting on 14th July to discuss locality policing

Mr. Filer reported that he and Mr. Poulton attended the police Neighbourhood Community Safety meeting on 14th July 2005.

The presentation focused on the partnership between the police and the local community in order to reduce crime, and reference was made to Neighbourhood Partnerships.

Inspector Pat Rawle stated that having started with 3 officers he now had 10 and felt able, through the use of Ward Constables, PCSO’s and Special Constables, to work closely in the partnership with the local communities to prevent crime. The Police want residents to be involved and to advise Ward Officers of their perceived priorities in order to produce Action plans for each locality.

c) Allotments

- **Public Liability Policy**

Mr. Poulton reminded Parish Councillors that in July 2004 we were advised by Allianz Cornhill that we must ensure that every allotment holder has Public Liability cover of at least £5,000,000. As previously reported, the Watton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association have taken out Public Liability cover for £5,000,000, which covers all allotment holders, not just its members. The cost of the premium is approximately £80 per annum. The Watton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association paid for the insurance from grant money received in 2004, which has now all been spent. Therefore, when their insurance cover comes up for renewal they do not have any funds to pay for it.

After discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council cover the cost of the insurance premium and increases the rent on a full allotment by £2 per plot (£1 for a half plot) to £13 per plot (£6.50 per half plot). When setting the budget for 2005/06 it was agreed that the allotment rent be increased from £10 to £11 for a full plot (£5 to £5.50 for a half plot). It was therefore agreed to write to the allotment holders as follows.

- **Allotment rent increase**

This is to advise you that the Parish Council has increased the rent for a full allotment to £13 with effect from 1st September 2005. Half allotments will be charged at £6.50.

Your rent goes towards the charges made by the Diocesan Board, from whom we lease the allotments. The cost of the allotment site is subsidized by the Parish Council.

On top of that the Parish Council spends around £200 per annum on improving the site and has also arranged for each allotment holder to be insured for £5 million pounds under a Public Liability policy as required by our insurers. (Obviously, the insurance is applicable to the allotment site only).

Please find attached an invoice in respect of your allotment.

- **Rubbish on Allotments**

Mr. Poulton said that an excessive amount of fly-tipping is occurring on the allotments. The rubbish accumulated is approximately four times the size of the Parish Council room. Mr. Smith verbally quoted a price of £30 to spread the rubbish evenly over the disused part of the allotments. It was agreed to accept Mr. Smith's quotation.

After lengthy discussion, it was agreed that when writing to allotment holders the following text is included.

- **Waste**

'The Parish Council wish to advise you that because of fly-tipping the composting area is being removed. Each allotment holder is now therefore responsible for the management and disposal of their own waste.

To avoid problems in the future, we request that waste is not deposited on any of the unused plots or areas within the allotment site. Please keep/manage your waste within the confines of your own plot, or remove it from the site completely.

We thank you for your co-operation in this matter.'

- **Renewal of Tenancy agreement and Charges**

Mr. Poulton said that we are now due to send out the annual allotment-rent invoices to all tenants.

He said that three allotment holders appear not to be cultivating their allotments. Therefore, it was agreed to write to the allotment holders of plots number 11a, 13a and 23a as follows.

'The Parish Council notes that your allotment has not been cultivated for some time. You will recall that under the terms for your tenancy agreement, your plot must be kept clear of weeds and maintained in good order.

Currently, we have a waiting list of residents requiring allotments.

With this in mind, please let me know if you intend to cultivate your allotment in the very near future or wish to terminate your tenancy agreement with us.'

The Clerk to write to all allotment holders accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

8 Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

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

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

Mr. Filer said that he will meet with the Clerk during October to review the budget items for 2006/07. He will then arrange a meeting of the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee prior to the Parish Council meeting to be held on 9th November, so that a draft budget can be agreed for discussion at that meeting.

- **Obtain quotes from contractors for work in 2006/07**

The Clerk to obtain quotations from current contractors.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Knight arrived at the meeting

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

Mr. Filer went through the expenditure and income items for both the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts. He explained that the first-quarter accounts are not a good reflection of 25% of the year's income and expenditure. For example, the precept is paid twice a year, representing 50% of the total income and seasonal expenditure items such as grass cutting do not occur during the winter months.

Due to some errors the Clerk to re-issue the Community Hall accounts.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Increase insurance cover for play-equipment items**

Mr. Poulton said that when he was doing costings for all major expenditure items identified by Parish Councillors, he noted that the insurance cover on play-equipment items was well below the replacement cost from Wicksteed Leisure. It was therefore agreed that Allianz Cornhill be asked to increase cover on all play-equipment items.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Filer to reflect the increased insurance valuation of the play equipment when setting the 2006/07 insurance budget figure.

Mr. Clark arrived at the meeting

- **Costings for all major expenditure items identified by Parish Councillors**

Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors were given a copy of the estimated long-term capital expenditure items compiled by Mr. Poulton.

Estimated long-term capital expenditure				
		>5 years	>10 years	>15 years
1	Repaint kicker boards on MPPA (last done in 2003)	£500		
2	Repair/stain seats	£200		
3	Replace seats around play area on sportsfield	£500		
4	Re-line sports-hall floor	£100		
5	Replace Community Hall guttering	£1,000		
6	Re-paint Community Hall exterior (last done in 2003)	£1,000		
7	Re-paint Community Hall interior	£500		
8	Replace play area safety-surface	£9,000		
9	Review welfare safety of trees on the sportsfield, Lammas and Watton Green	£1,000		
10	Repair paving around Community Hall 0 -5 Years	£2,000		
11	Replace computer and printer	£750		
12	Re-varnish ornate village sign	£250		
13	Renew fence on MPPA		£10,000	
14	Replace sports-hall floor		£7,000	
15	Replace large swings		£3,000	
16	Replace small swings		£2,000	
17	Replace see-saw		£2,500	
18	Re-surface Community Hall car park		£5,000	
19	Replace boiler in Community Hall		£5,000	
20	Replace showers		£1,000	
21	Replace wooden fence on sportsfield		£1,000	
22	Clean War Memorial (last done in 2003)		£1,500	
23	Footpath signs		£1,000	
24	Re-surface MPPA			£12,000
25	Replace teen-shelter			£4,000
26	Replace two spring-mobiles			£2,000
27	Replace play-system			£7,000
28	Renew kitchen units			£1,000
	Totals	£16,800	£39,000	£26,000

Mr. Filer said that the above list of estimated long-term capital expenditure is a good explanation of why we hold money in reserve. The items to be done within the next 5 years represents approximately the total amount of money currently held in reserve.

Mrs. McCash asked if some of these figures were included in the annual-budget figures. Mr. Poulton said that the above figures are over and above the normal budgeted figures. For example, we regularly paint parts of the Community Hall interior, however we do not paint all of it within our annual budget. Item 7 shows a sum of £500 to paint the Community Hall interior, it would actually cost far more than that, but part of the cost is born from the annual-budget figure.

Mr. Smith suggested that the above document be dated and copied to all Parish Councillors and a copy to be placed in the in the Parish Council folder. This was agreed.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

Community Hall Trustees

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

- **Summer Play Scheme**

Mr. Poulton read out a letter from EHC regarding the success of the Summer Play Scheme that they ran for four weeks at the Community Hall during the school summer holidays.

Because no damage occurred to the building this year, the Clerk has returned the £100 deposit to EHC.

It was agreed that the Summer Play Scheme was a great success even though there was a shortage of police presence due to PC Andy Woodwood getting married and Police Community Liaison Officer (PCSO) Paul Weston sustaining a leg injury.

Mr. Meischke said part of the reason for the success was because the children who attended the Summer Play Scheme this year were much younger than in previous years and the older children did not hang around the Community Hall causing problems.

- **Boiler**

James A. Turner Ltd had to be called out to repair the boiler because it was overflowing due to a faulty pressure-value. However, Mr. Poulton has since found it leaking again. Mr. Meischke said that he thought that the problem had now resolved itself but had informed James A. Turner Ltd about the situation, which is being monitored.

- **Repair of windows and insurance claim**

Mr. Poulton said that the police had confirmed that damage caused to the Parish Council meeting-room windows, which are peppered with small holes, was done by a ball-bearing gun. The police have suggested that the notices in the windows were being used as targets. Mr. Poulton said that he had now removed all notices from the windows.

Stevenage Glass quoted £637 (plus VAT) to repair the windows and have now been instructed to do the work as soon as possible. A completed claim-form has been submitted to Allianz Cornhill for the cost of the replacement windows, minus the excess and VAT element.

- **Cutting of sportsfield hedge**

Mr. Whitehead has given us a verbal quotation of £320, which is an increase of £20 on the price he has charged since 2000. Mr. Poulton said that because it was such a small increase, he had asked the Clerk to accept Mr. Whitehead's quotation, which she did.

Parish Councillors agreed with this decision.

Recreation & Amenities

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

- **MPPA - floodlight bulbs**

Mr. Knight said that it was agreed at the Parish Council meeting held on 8th June 2005, that, before the start of winter, we would change the 5 floodlighting bulbs that were not replaced earlier this year. We already have one bulb in stock so a further 4 need to be purchased.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Knight to arrange for the replacement bulbs to be fitted as soon as possible.

Action: I. Knight

- **Sportsfield - general**

Mr. Knight said that the re-seeding and fertilizing work on the sportsfield had been a success and the area was in good condition.

- **Football pitch - permanent line-marking**

We had two quotations for line-marking on the football pitch were obtained.

- Sodexho Land Technology £163.35 (plus VAT)
- Frank Cooper and Son Limited £60 (plus VAT)

Frank Cooper and Son Limited's quotation was accepted and the work has now been done.

The Sports and Social Club has given us a cheque for £60 as a donation towards the cost of the work.

- **Additional Tennis Court**

Mr. Knight said that progress on this is slow.

One of the tennis players parents, Jim Smith, has agreed to draw up the final plans (at no cost) for submission to the EHC planning department.

- **Sports and Social Club re Sportsfield maintenance**

Mr. Poulton said that Mr. Knight had written to us (in his capacity as Treasurer of the Sports and Social Club) as follows.

Sportsfield maintenance

‘It was agreed the Parish Council would pay 50% of the cost of applying fertilizer and seed to the playing field. The work was carried-out in April and the full cost was £571.

The Parish Council share would then be £285.’

It was agreed to make this payment to the Sports and Social Club.’

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

Environment

In the absence of Mrs. Dinnin, Mr. Poulton reported on the following items concerning the Environment Sub-Committee.

- **Meeting with Sue Clarkson (CMS)**

Mrs. Dinnin and Mr. Poulton had a very successful meeting with Sue Clarkson to discuss items to be included on the interpretation boards for the Lammas.

Sue will present the draft layout for the interpretation boards during our Parish Council meeting on 12th October for comments and approval.

- **Hogweed on the Lammas**

Mr. Poulton and Mrs. Dinnin looked at two small patches of Hogweed; which have since been treated with weed-killer by Ben Cannon. Mrs. Dinnin will monitor the situation.

- **Adam Welch**

Adam Welch has left for a five-month trip around the world. He has submitted a quotation for the village grass cuts for 2006 and a provisional one for work to the Lammas bank. These will be discussed when setting the 2006/07 budget.

Adam Welch’s colleague (Matt) can do any additional work required this season while he is away.

It was agreed to ask Matt to do an additional grass-cut at the beginning of October. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Grass cutting on the Lammas and Watton Green September 2005**

Mr. Smith said that he was not sure if the Lammas and Watton Green needed cutting again this season.

It was agreed to ask Sue Clarkson to inspect the grass and then act on her advice.

- **P3 work programme**

Mr. Dunhill said that he was meeting with Sue Clarkson on Thursday 22nd September, at 1530, to discuss what items should be included in our 2006 P3 grant-application.

It was agreed that Mr. Dunhill ask Sue Clarkson if she is willing to visit Watton Green and the Lammas prior to their meeting on the 22nd September. They can then have their meeting to discuss the P3 work program in the Community Hall. **Action: V. Dunhill**

b) Sportsfield

i) Report

Mr. Poulton did the sportsfield report on the 12th September 2005, the result of which is as follows.

- **Sportsfield:**

Condition of grass	Very good, but bushes by Community Hall need pruning.
Litter	None.
Dog fouling	Empty and no dog fouling.
Netball posts	Good – hedge needs cutting, but in hand to be done.
General	Very good.

- **Children’s Play Area:**

Condition of surface	Good.
Litter/Litterbin	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	Weed spray around edges.
• Bike ramps area:	
Junior Jump	Good.
Double Ramp	Good.
Fun Box	Good.
• Community Hall:	
General Condition (Exterior)	Good. Windows to be repaired but in hand. Water leaking from boiler room.
Litterbin	Empty.
Car Park	Could do with weeds and mud being cleared from bottom bit by the gate.
General	Good, but brushes needed for boot scrapper.
• Multi-Purpose Play Area:	
Surface	OK, but same comment as last month re lifting.
Boundary Fencing	Very good.
Tennis nets	Good.
Litter	None.
General	Overall in very good condition. Could do with a sweep by the entrance.
• Great Innings Play Area:	
Equipment	Good.
Surfaces	Good.
Litter	None.
Dog fouling	None.
Comments	One sign has small amount of graffiti. I have reported this to EHC.
• Allotments Area:	
Access	Hedge needs trimming.
Condition of paths between Allotments	Good.
Condition of Allotments under cultivation	Good.
Condition of Allotments not under cultivation	Needs letter sent.
Litter	None.
Comments	“Compost area”, very large due to fly-tipping. Spoke to John Philips re barbed-wire, promised to remove – it has now gone.
• Culverts on Mill Lane	
Litter and rubbish in and around Culverts	Good.
Dog-fouling	None.
Comments	“Bike ramps” not being used.
• Salt bins	
Perrywood Lane	
Entrance to Great Innings	Full, has rubbish in.
Great Innings South – outside number 93	Full.
Station Road	Full.
Moorymead Close (2)	Full – one at entrance has rubbish in.
Hazeldell	Full.
Footpath 17	Full.
• 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.
Opposite 5 School Lane	OK.

- **War Memorial**
General Comments Very good.
- **Ornate Village Sign**
General Comments Very good.
Comment I am in contact with EHC and HCC re the cutting of the grass in this area.

- **Bushes by Community Hall**
Mr. Poulton said that Adam Welch had failed to cut back the bushes by the Community Hall before he left. He instructed the Clerk to contact Adam's colleague (Matt) to do the work and she left a message on his mobile answer-phone. The Clerk to chase. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Cutting of sportsfield hedge**
This item was reported on under 8 a, Community Hall Trustees – Cutting of sportsfield hedge (on page 6 of these minutes).
- **Weed spraying**
Mr. Smith to spray the weeds around the play area. **Action: M. Smith**
- **Repair of windows and water leaking from boiler room.**
Both these items were discussed under 8 a, Community Hall – Boiler and Repair of windows (on page 6 of these minutes).
- **Community Hall car park**
Ted Brown to be instructed to clear the weeds and mud from the bottom end of the car park, by the gate. **Action: N. Poulton**
- **Boot scrapers**
Mr. Knight is obtaining quotations for replacement brushes needed for the boot scrapers. He is also obtaining quotations for larger boot-scrappers, because the current ones are too small.
This item to be placed on the agenda for the Community Hall Trustees meeting to be held on 11th October
Agenda: Trustees-10/05
- **Entrance of MPPA**
Ted Brown to be instructed to sweep the entrance of the MPPA. **Action: N. Poulton**
- **Barbed-wire**
Mr. Poulton said that he spoke to John Phillips about the barbed-wire on the disused allotment-gate and informed him that because it is near a public footpath it is illegal and must be removed without delay. Mr. Phillips has now removed the barbed-wire. Mrs. McCash said that she had arranged for the barbed-wire to be removed the day after the July Parish Council meeting. However, approximately two weeks later, it had been put back again.
- **Grass area around the ornate village sign**
Mr. Poulton said that the grassed area around the ornate village sign has not been cut for some time and is letting the overall appearance of the village down. He has been in contact with EHC and HCC regarding the grass cutting work that Sodexo Land Technology does for them in the village. Apart from the area in question, the grassed areas in the village look extremely good. Mr. Poulton has been assured that the grassed area around the ornate village sign will be cut by the end of the month, at the latest, and then will go on a regular schedule to be cut at the same time as all the other grass cutting is done in the village.

iii) Weekly report and action

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

9 Correspondence received

a) Mr. Harris – Letter re problems with Stort Valley

Mr. Poulton said that Mr. Harris (The Grey House, 32 High Street) wrote to us on 7th August about the broken fence and rubbish at the rear of his property adjacent to the block of flats on the Great Innings estate. The rubbish, which included settees, windows, shelving and cardboard boxes, has since been removed. However more rubbish is already been dumped in its place. Mr. Poulton said that he wrote on 30th August to Jules Bickers [Director of Customer Services (Housing), Stort Valley Housing Association] asking him to investigate Mr. Harris's complaints and let us know what action is going to be taken to stop this anti-social behaviour. To date, no response has been received.

It was agreed to write again to Mr. Bickers as follows.

'At a meeting of the Watton at Stone Parish Council on Wednesday 14th September, Councillors were very disappointed that they had not received any acknowledgement regarding their letter dated 30th August; despite two phone calls asking for a response.

In order that the Parish Council can write formally to Mr. Harris, would you be kind enough to write, by return, informing us as to what action Stort Valley is going to take over the complaints raised in Mr. Harris's letter of the 7th August.'

The Clerk to write accordingly and send a copy of the letter to Mr. Harris.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Poulton said that he had lodged a complaint with Stort Valley Housing Association about Mr. Bickers' lack of response to this matter.

b) Copy of letter from Hertfordshire Highways to Mr. and Mrs. Brett

Mr. Poulton read out a letter, dated 15th August, from Danny Kyan (District Manager, Hertfordshire Highways) to Mr. and Mrs. Brett (5 Old School Orchard) which was copied to the Parish Council.

'Stage 2 Complaint Investigation Report – Action from recommendation 7.2

Further to our recent notification of this report, I write to follow up the recommendation at Section 7.2 for the Environment Department, you and the Parish Council to agree a deadline by which clear ownership of the hedge will be established. I feel it would be in everyone's interest to resolve the hedge ownership issue at the earliest opportunity and I hope we can agree a timescale to conclude this.

I therefore welcome your views on expediting this action. I also wish to let you know that I am sending a copy of this letter to the Parish Council to obtain their views and enable their involvement in the process. Please contact me if you feel it would be helpful to meet me initially to progress his issues.'

After discussion, it was agreed to write to Danny Kyan informing him that the Parish Council does not have, nor does it want, an interest in the ownership of the hedge involved in this dispute.

Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop

c) EHC – Application for work to Oak tree on Sportsfield

Malcolm Amey, Arboricultural Officer at EHC, has written (letter dated 19th July) to inform us that our application for the removal of the large bough from the Oak tree on the sportsfield has been refused. The reasons for refusal are as follows.

'Removing the bough at source would remove energy from the tree, decrease the area of leaf available for the process of photosynthesis. A large pruning wound would be created if the bough were removed, thus inviting decay pathogens.

Removal of the bough would not improve the visual appearance of the tree, but would shorten its safe useful life expectancy.'

d) Mr. & Mrs. Wood - re extension of licensing hours at Waggon & Horses Public House

Mr. and Mrs. Wood copied the Parish Council with their objections to the extension of licensing hours at the Waggon and Horses Public House. Mrs. McCash said that the reason that so many houses in Long Meadow were on the market was because the residents objected to the increased hours at the Waggon and Horses Public House.

Mr. Poulton said that he had attended the recent licensing committee meeting at which there were residents from Long Meadow and they seemed quite happy with the outcome of the Licensing Committee's decision. On the nights that the Waggon and Horses Public House will stay open later than 1100 there are strict rules in place which include keeping windows closed and reducing the sound of music so that it cannot be heard by neighbouring residents.

e) East of England Plan Public Examination date

The Panel Secretariat at the East of England Public Examination wrote on 5th August to inform us that the start of the examination date for the East of England draft plan has been deferred until Tuesday 1st November 2005.

Mr. Knight asked if the Parish Council and the public's comments will be taken into account. Mr. Poulton said that there is a huge file containing all comments made. However, he did not know at the end of the day if any presentations made would alter the final decision made by the government.

f) James-Motion – Transfer of license

James - Motion wrote on 5th August 2005 to inform us that Susan Mary Bradford (now residing at Highways public house, 67 Old Highways, Hoddesdon) has applied for a transfer of license in respect of the Waggon and Horses public house. The application will be heard at the Hertford Courthouse on 20th September 2005. The licence is currently held by Sally Jane Bond.

g) Boardmans Photocopying Ltd – Maintenance agreement

Boardmans Photocopying Limited wrote on 19th August as follows.

Photocopier Maintenance Agreement

Following a review of our Meterplan Maintenance Agreements, we feel that with rising fuel costs and you location we can no longer maintain your machine on a maintenance agreement given your current usage. Please accept this letter of 90 days termination notice required in the contract. The last meter reading will be the end of December 2005.

While we will endeavour to maintain your Cannon NP6012 on a fully chargeable basis, we have been informed by Canon UK Ltd that parts for this machine will become unavailable from January 2006, so maintenance after that time will become more difficult.

I hope you understand our position in this matter and, like to feel we provide a good service to you our customer and hop we can continue to do so in the future.

Assuring you of our best attention at all times.’

Mr. Poulton said that because the Clerk is using the Parish Council printer/copier to do most of the printing for the Parish Council, and the Watton-at-Stone PCC are doing the bulk photocopier for us, the photocopy machine is getting used less and less. He suggested that the machine be used until it either no longer works or we are unable to obtain any spare cartridges for it.

The Clerk will arrange for the machine to be serviced by Boardmans Photocopying Limited before the end of the year and also obtain a spare cartridge from them. **Action: J. Allsop**

10 Reports from other Organisations

- **‘No Ball Games’**

Mr. Poulton thanked Mr. Smith for reinstating the ‘No Ball Games’ sign that had been knocked over.

- **‘Road markings and signage for School Lane**

It was agreed to write to Hertfordshire Highways re our request in May 2004 for road markings and signage to slow down the traffic in School Lane.

The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Solar-heating panels**

Mr. Smith suggested that because fuel prices are likely to increase considerably in the future, the Community Hall Trustees should consider installing solar panels on the roof of the Community Hall.

Mr. Poulton agreed to investigate the cost of installing solar heating and see if there are any grants available.

Action: N. Poulton

- **Watton-at-Stone School Governors**

Mr. Clark said that he had nothing to report from the Watton-at-Stone School Governors. However, he was sorry to report that the school had been broken into twice in the last week.

Mr. Clark said that his action point to speak to the Watton-at-Stone School Governors re school coaches blocking Rectory Lane is outstanding.

Action: C. Clark

- **Land adjacent to 99 High Street - New dwelling house and parking**

Mr. Clark said that asking the Parish Council and residents to comment on the planning application for 99 High Street had been a futile excise as none of their views had been taken into consideration.

Mr. Poulton said that he attended the planning committee meeting when a decision was made on 99 High Street. He stood up against the application and not one planning committee member supported him.

Mr. Poulton said one of the concerns over disruption to neighbours and the surrounding area, while the property is being built, is not considered to be a planning issue.

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

Mrs. McCash said the Memorial Hall car park has been resurfaced and is looking very good.

11 Items for Parish News

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

- Vandalism to Community Hall Windows
- Summer Play Scheme

Mr. Filer to write the article accordingly.

Action: D. Filer

12 Accounts

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash

Receipts

		Payments	
1 video	5.00	75 stamps x 30p	<u>22.50</u>
Photocopying	<u>3.00</u>		<u>22.50</u>
	<u>8.00</u>		

Cheques required

J. Allsop	Phone calls to 3/5/05, 3/6/05 and 3/7/05	75.00
Frank Cooper	Grass cutting – June 2005	205.62
Post Office	For inland revenue payment re Tax and NI	177.78
Ted Brown	24 hours work	156.00
HCC –	Lighting energy charges - 1/4/05- 30/6/ 05	118.67
HCC –	Lighting maintenance charges - 1/4/05- 30/6/ 05	202.63
Lubbock Fine	Audit fee	293.75
Hyde Hall Partnership	Weed wipe on the Lammas	205.63
Frank Cooper	Grass cutting – July 2005	164.50
Blue Bury Farm contractors	Grass cutting and strimming on the Lammas and Watton Green	558.13
J. Allsop	August salary	545.01
Ted Brown	32 hours work	208.00
Ted Brown	Strimming around sportsfield	70.00
Adam Welch	Grass cutting	540.00
Ted Brown	33 hours	214.00
Adam Welch	Grass cutting	320.00
Frank Cooper	Football pitch marking	70.50
J A Morrissey	Internal Audit of Parish Council accounts	100.00
C D A for Herts	Annual Subscription	25.00
J. Allsop	Phone calls to 3/08, 3/09.05	50.00
J. Allsop	September salary	<u>545.01</u>
		<u>4845.23</u>

Cheques received

EHC	Annual litterpick grant	524.16
Sports and Social Club	Donation for football pitch line marking	60.00
Sports and Social Club	¼ year rent	<u>258.75</u>
		<u>842.91</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash

Receipts

		Payments	
Jim Keen – Main Hall hire	120.00	2 roles of glass tape	9.82
Barry Moor – Main Hall hire	<u>80.00</u>	Cleaning materials	42.95
	<u>200.00</u>	Clock	<u>11.74</u>
			<u>64.51</u>

Cheques required

Rosemary Brown	18 hours cleaning	108.00
Rosemary Brown	16 hours cleaning	96.00
J. Phillips	Toilet opening duties	31.00
Watton Service Station	Repair to MPPA fence	270.25
Rosemary Brown	21 hours cleaning	126.00
EHC	Return of Summer Play scheme deposit	100.00
HCC	Cleaning materials	81.76
James Turner	Repair work to hearing system	<u>302.05</u>
		<u>1115.06</u>

Cheques received

Badminton Club	Main Hall hire	112.50
Mr. and Mrs. Giddins	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	39.00
Gill Gilbey	Main Hall hire	55.00
Allotment & Garden Assoc	Pavilion hire	7.00
Dave Boddy	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	324.00
Liz Welch	Main Hall hire	97.20
Emma Fowler	Meeting room hire	126.00
Sports and Social Club	¼ year rent	<u>258.75</u>
		<u>1019.45</u>

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

- **The meeting closed at 2050.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 12th October 2005.**