

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 14th June 2006

Present: Mr. N. Poulton (Chairman) Mr. J. Meischke (Vice-Chairman)
 Mrs. C. Dinnin Mr. V. Dunhill
 Mr. D. Filer Mr. I. Knight
 Mr. M. Smith Mr. D. Stock
 The Clerk (Mrs. J. Allsop)

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Mr. Clark and Mrs. McCash.

2 Public Participation

None.

3 Declaration of Interests

Mr. Stock and Mr. Dunhill declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 6 a ii, Planning applications – 14 Hazeldell (on page 2 of these minutes).

4 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

Mr. Poulton said that he had two additional urgent items.

- **Gas works in Hazeldell**
This item was discussed under 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee (on page x of these minutes).
- **Additional planning application at Watton JMI School**
This item was discussed under 6 a iii (on page 3 of these minutes).

5 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on 10th May 2006**
Mr. Meischke proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.
Mrs. Dinnin seconded the motion and all present at that meeting were in favour.
- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 10th May 2006**
Mr. Filer proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.
Mr. Meischke seconded the motion and all present at that meeting were in favour.

b) Review of actions

- **Photocopy the Parish Council and Community Hall Trustees reports for distribution around the village:** complete.
- **Contact all organisations re elected Parish Council representatives:** complete.
- **Contact Charity Commission to clarify election of Community Hall Trustees**
Mr. Poulton said that Mrs. McCash had looked at the Charity Commission website and then spoke to their Emma Price who confirmed that only Pension Funds and Investment Trusts need an annual vote/change of trustees and this did not apply to the Trustees of the Watton-at-Stone Community Hall.
- **Chase Mr. Pressland re ferreting licences**
The Clerk said she had written to Mr. Pressland again and no response had been received.
- **Chase Raj Goutam re overgrown shrubbery near the Walkern Road bridge**
Mr. Knight said that he had contacted Raj Goutam again by e-mail, but received no response. Mr. Knight to chase again. **Action: I. Knight**
- **Ask HCC to be repair the kissing-gate:** complete.
- **Chase Hertfordshire Highways re pot holes in Church Lane ('Clappers Lane'):** outstanding.
Action: J. Allsop
- **Write to planning department re 27 Lammas Road:** complete.
- **Write to planning department re 2 Perrywood Lane:** complete.
- **Write to planning department re Ballacrain, Walkern Road:** complete.
- **Write to planning department re 101 High Street:** complete.
- **On receipt of £1000 grant from EHC send cheque for £2000 to Hertfordshire Highways:** complete.

- **Chase Scout and Guide Group and Watton Primary School re trophies**
Both the trophies have been given to the Clerk. However, the recipients of this year's award are as yet unknown. The Clerk to chase and get the trophies engraved accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Obtain a copy of the Railway Emergency Plan for the Parish Council:** outstanding. **Action: H. McCash**
- **Ask Ted Brown to clear footpath between Bull Public House and the High Street:** complete.
- **Arrange for the four floodlighting bulbs to be replaced:** outstanding. **Action: I. Knight**
- **Obtain cost for a movable boot-bath to be used by the footballers:** outstanding. **Action: I. Knight**
- **Obtain a chain and padlock to secure the football posts to the MPPA fencing:** complete.
- **Obtain quotations for replacing the external doors in the pavilion**
This item to be deferred to the Parish Council meeting to be held on 13th September 2006. **Agenda: 09/06**
- **Include cost of replacing external doors in the pavilion in next year's budget (2007/08)**
When the costings have been obtained this figure will be included in the 2007/08 budget.
- **Inspect the post-and-rail fence on the sportsfield and arrange for any repair work required**
Mr. Poulton said he asked Mr. Smith to repair the fence. Mr. Smith said that when he went to repair the fence he found that the work had already been done.
- **Arrange for missing cross-bar rail to be replaced on Watton Green**
Mr. Filer said that he had replaced the cross-bar rail, but this has since been removed by Bluebury Contracting to allow them access to cut the grass on Watton Green. Mr. Smith said that he would ensure that the cross-bar rail is reinstated when the work has been completed. **Action: M. Smith**
- **Send Sports and Social Club contribution towards sportsfield maintenance:** completed.
- **Speak to Mr. Evernden about request to erect a fence on the allotment land:** completed.
- **Ask Cricket Club to be careful with water usage and not to leave the hosepipe unattended whilst it is in use:** completed.

c) Action points outstanding for more than two months

- **Arrange for 2005/06 minutes to be bound in book form:** Still outstanding. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Arrange for internal audit of Parish Council accounts to be done by Jim Morrissey**
Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall Trustees - Internal audit of Parish Council accounts by Jim Morrissey and external audit by Lubbock and Fine (on page 4 of these minutes).
- **Arrange for Community Hall accounts to be audited by McCash and Hay:** completed.
Refer to item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee - External audit of and Community Hall accounts by McCash and Hay (on page 4 of these minutes).

6 Planning

a) Applications

i) 124 High Street

Wooden garden shed

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.

ii) 14 Hazeldell

Demolish rear conservatory and construct new front and rear ground extension

Mr. Stock and Mr. Dunhill took no part in the discussions relating to this application.

Mr. Poulton said that Mrs. McCash visited the neighbouring residents and they objected to the application for the following reasons.

1. Front extension would be too far out and out of building line with other front extensions
2. Rear extension is again too far out and too high.

Mrs. McCash has spoken with the East Herts Council planner responsible for this application. He visited the site and was also not happy with the application because it would create a parking problem, i.e. there would be insufficient room to park a family-sized car at the front of the property.

Parish Councillors studied the plans for this application and after discussion agreed to write as follows.

'The Parish Council objects to the above application for the following reasons

The application is a general over-development of the site with encroachment over the existing building line.'

Action: J. Allsop

iii) Watton JMI School – 2 applications

- **Application for extension and remodelling of classroom for foundation unit and internal toilets
Formation of fenced hard play area for use by the foundation unit**

Parish Councillors viewed the plans for this application and after discussion agreed that the Parish Council has no objections to it. However, it was agreed to ask HCC to ensure that the contractors take special care regarding the safety of children in this area and that ingress is available to all the surrounding properties. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Application for retention of existing double mobile classroom for use by Watton-at-Stone Playgroup at Watton-at-Stone JMI**

Parish Councillors viewed the plans and agreed to write to the County Development Unit (HCC) informing them that the Parish Council has no objections to the application. **Action: J. Allsop**

b) Decisions

i) The Old Coach House, Rectory Lane

Additional Front Dormer - East Herts Council permission refused

Mr. Poulton read out East Herts’ reasons for refusing the application (dated 4th May 2006), as follows.

1. The proposed dormer window, by reason of its size, siting, form and design, in concert with existing and approved dormers set within the roof would be unsympathetic, out of keeping with and detrimental to the design and appearance of the existing dwelling, and detrimental to the character and appearance of the street scene.
2. The proposal would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the Watton-at-Stone Conservation Area within the site it is situated, contrary to policy BE18 of the East Herts Local Plan.

ii) 27 Lammas Road

Small ground floor side extension to kitchen & first-floor side and rear extension above existing kitchen & dining room - East Herts Council permission refused

Mr. Poulton read out East Herts’ reasons for refusing the application (dated 4th May 2006), as follows.

1. The proposed development by reason of its layout, height, scale and massing is of a poor standard of design, unsympathetic to the context of the site and fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of the area. The proposal is thereby contrary to Policy BE2 of the East Hertfordshire Local Plan and national planning guidance in PPS1 ‘Delivering Sustainable Development’ para 34.
2. The proposed 2 storey rear and side extension, by reason of its size and siting in relation to the adjoining properties, would have an overbearing and overshadowing effect on those properties to the detriment of the residents thereof, and would thereby be contrary to policy BE5 (III) of the East Hertfordshire Local Plan.
3. The proposed 2 storey side and rear extension by reason of its size and siting in relation to the adjoining footpath, would have an overbearing and overshadowing effect on that footpath, to the detriment of its users and would thereby be contrary to policy BE5 (III) of the East Hertfordshire Local Plan.

iii) 2 Perrywood Lane

Alterations of existing bungalow to 1 ½ storey dwelling - East Herts Council permission granted

7 Specific items

a) Lammas Road street lighting

Mr. Poulton had received an e-mail from Danny Kyan (District Manger – East Herts, Hertfordshire Highways) informing him that the Lammas Road street lighting project has been passed to their design team to progress, with a view to having it in place this financial year. However, a specific timescale cannot be given at present because they are required to prioritise the service demands to reduce risks to users. This means that the safety-related measures and general maintenance works to areas of higher utility are given priority.

This item to be removed from the agenda.

b) Awarding of the Good Citizenship trophy and the Cup for Outstanding Effort

This item was discussed under 5 b, Review of actions - Chase Scout and Guide Group and Watton Primary school re trophies (on page 1 of these minutes).

c) Photocopying charges

The Clerk has been told by Rodney Ranzetta that the Watton-at-Stone PCC has been undercharging for photocopying. The Watton-at-Stone PCC thought that their contract charge was the same for A3 and A4 copies. In fact, the cost is such that an A3 sheet is twice as much as an A4 sheet.

The previous charge to the Parish Council was 1.5p per-single-sided A3 or A4 sheet. The new charge will be 1.5p per single-sided A4 sheet (3p double-sided) and 3p per single-sided A3 sheet.

8 Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

Mr. Filer reported on the following item concerning the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee.

- **Internal audit of Parish Council accounts by Jim Morrissey and external audit by Lubbock and Fine**

Mr. Filer said that Jim Morrissey completed and signed sections 1 and 4 of the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2006 (all Parish Councillors have been given a copy of the completed Annual Return and Mr. Morrissey's letter dated 8th June 2006).

The figures contained in Mr. Morrissey's letter differ from those presented at the Annual Parish Council meeting. Mr. Filer said that the differences in the total figures can be accounted for as follows.

- £5,000 - provision from 2004/05 does not appear in Mr. Morrissey's figures
- £7.50 - 25 x 30p stamps was wrongly shown in the accounts presented at the Annual Parish meeting.

Mr. Filer suggested that in future the accounts attached to the Annual Parish Report and the Watton-at-Stone Community Hall Trustees Annual Report should not be copied to all households in the Parish until we have had the appropriate audits completed. This was agreed.

Mr. Filer proposed that the accounts, detailed in section 1 and the Statement of Assurance, detailed in section 2 of the Annual Return, be approved by the Parish Council and that the Chairman and the Clerk sign the Annual Return. Mr. Smith seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Mr. Poulton and the Clerk duly signed the Annual Return and the Statement of Assurance.

After the public inspection period (which ends on 26th June), the Clerk to return all relevant documentation to Lubbock Fine by 30th June 2006.

Action: J. Allsop

- **External audit of and Community Hall accounts by McCash and Hay**

McCash and Hay have completed the audit of the Watton-at-Stone Community Hall accounts for the year ended 31st March 2006. Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors present were given a copy of those accounts.

Mr. Meischke proposed that Mr. Poulton sign the audited accounts for the Watton-at-Stone Community Hall. Mrs. Dinnin seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

A copy of the signed accounts to be sent to McCash and Hay.

Action: D. Filer

- **Internet banking**

The Clerk asked if she could complete the on-line banking forms to allow her to do internet banking. This was agreed.

Action: J. Allsop

Community Hall Trustees

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

- **Gas contract**

Mr. Poulton said that that he had now heard from Energy Watch and British Gas Business and was pleased to report that we have received a three-year contract for the supply of gas. The contract is valid from 3rd March 2006 to 3rd March 2009. The Parish Council accepted British Gas Business' offer for the supply of gas and electricity on 27th July 2005, therefore an additional seven months has been gained on the late issue of the contract.

- **Annual Inspection of Fire Equipment**

Mr. Poulton said that because Kidde Fire Protection prices appeared to be very high, he had obtained a quotation from Herts Fire Protection for the annual inspection of the fire equipment in the Community Hall.

Herts Fire Protection quoted £56 plus VAT to do the same work that Kidde Fire Protection charged us £86.29 plus VAT for last year.

It was agreed to ask Herts Fire Protection to do the annual fire equipment inspection. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Feasibility and costing of installing acoustic panels in the sports hall and pavilion**

This item to be deferred until the Parish Council meeting to be held on 11th October 2006. **Agenda: 10/06**

Recreation & Amenities

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

- **MPPA**

Now that the ground is dry, Mr. Knight will arrange for the four floodlighting-bulbs to be replaced.

Action: I. Knight

- **Boot-bath/scrapper**

Nothing to report.

- **Additional Tennis Court**

Mr. Knight is still waiting for Jim Smith to give him the modified plans for the tennis court.

- **Top soil required to fill in area between teen shelter and multi-play equipment**

Mr. Meischke to inspect this area when he does the sportsfield report in July.

Action: J. Meischke

- **Oak tree in sportsfield hedge**

Clare Lewis (The Beeches, School Lane) has told the Clerk that the Oak tree in the sportsfield hedge is growing around the telephone wire. Because the tree has been pollarded in the past the growth is very thick.

This Oak tree has been pollarded by the Parish Council every five years and Dr Norden (10 School Lane) has paid for the work to be done. It is now almost five years since this was done last.

It was agreed to write to Dr. Norden asking him if he is willing, as before, to pay for the tree to be pollarded in the very near future.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Leaking sewer on Sportsfield**

Mr. Poulton said that there had been a raw-sewage leak from the drain on the sportsfield adjacent to the flowerbed. Because there was a lack of cooperation between the residents in the three properties in Rectory Lane who are responsible for the sewer, East Herts Council arranged for the repair work needed and will invoice them accordingly.

At Mr. Poulton's request, the Environmental Health Department at East Herts Council sent out contractors to clear up the sportsfield today. No further action is needed.

It was agreed that a plan of the sportsfield showing the location of all meters, drains, etc. should be made.

Action: V. Dunhill

Environment

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

- **Letters from Sue Jarczewski**

All Parish Councillors have been provided with copies of the letters (dated 25th and 28th April 2006) from Sue Jarczewski.

- **The Lammas**

Mrs. Dinnin said that one of the three Polar trees on the Lammas riverbank is dead. It was agreed that there was no need to have any tree surgery done at the present.

Although Bluebury Contracting have done the grass cutting on the Lammas and Watton Green, Mr. Smith confirmed that there was still some tidying up/strimming work to be done on both sites.

Mrs. Dinnin said that there are some additional areas that need strimming/clearing on the Lammas. When Bluebury Contracting have finished their work on the Lammas and Watton Green, Mrs. Dinnin will meet with Mr. Smith (on the Lammas) to discuss the additional work required so that he can submit a quotation accordingly.

Action: C. Dinnin/M. Smith

- **The Cottage Site**

It was agreed to obtain quotations for the coppicing work required on the Cottage Site. Grant applications towards the cost of the work will be submitted to LEAF (Local Environment Action Fund) and the Countryside Management Service and a 2007/08 budget provision made for the shortfall.

Action: C. Dinnin

- **Illegal planting on the Lammas**

Mrs. Dinnin said that the area is very overgrown, however, on inspection it did appear that the illegal planting had been removed.

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

This item was covered under item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Letters from Sue Jarczewski re the Lammas (on page 5 of these minutes).

- **Gas-pipe replacement work in Hazeldell**

Mr. Stock said that this work had caused much disruption and been the source of much unrest. Although he accepted that this must be expected to a certain extent, he explained his deep concern about it and the unacceptable state in which some of the roads, pavements, grass verges and trees had been left in by the contractors. He also felt that further work of this type within the village should be monitored to avoid a repeat of the problems experienced so far.

It was agreed that Mr. Stock write to Danny Kyan (District Manger – East Herts, Hertfordshire Highways) asking him to resolve these issues and ensure that they do not happen again in Watton-at-Stone. A copy of the letter to be sent to County Councillor Bryan Hammond. **Action: D. Stock**

b) Sportsfield

i) Report

Mr. Meischke said that he had not done the sportsfield report but would do it prior to the Parish Council meeting on 12th July 2006.

ii) Weekly report and action

There was nothing to report from Ted Brown's weekly inspections.

9 Correspondence received

a) Police Force restructuring questionnaire

All Parish Councillors were forwarded a copy of the e-mail dated 19th May and attachments from Roger Bardle (Hertfordshire Police Force) concerning the Police Force Restructuring.

It was agreed to respond in support of the proposals to merge the Hertfordshire Constabulary with the Essex and Bedfordshire police forces. **Action: J. Allsop**

b) Martin Tipper – Cricket Club

Mr. Poulton read out the following letter (dated 16th May) from Martin Tipper, Watton-at-Stone Cricket Club.

'Purchase of new electronic scoreboard

In an attempt to further update and improve facilities to meet the requirements of the Herts County Cricket League, the Cricket Club is proposing an electronic scoreboard.

The scoreboard will be stored in our storage shed and will only be visible on match days when it will be put on display at the top of the field and be operated by remote control by the scorer seated in front of the pavilion.

The main reason in writing to you is that having applied for a Community Capital Grant through East Herts Council we are informed that our first approach should be to the Parish Council, firstly to ascertain whether your Council would be prepared to offer any financial assistance and secondly to confirm that there are no objections to the proposal.

The scoreboard will cost in the region of £2300 of which the Cricket Club is able to provide 50% of the funding.

I would be grateful if you could provide me with a response as soon as possible so that, if necessary, we can continue to pursue funding through the Capital Grant Scheme and be able to purchase the scoreboard this season.'

Mr. Poulton read out his response dated 18th May.

'The Parish Council thanks you for your letter of 16th May and following your conversation with our Chairman, Mr. Nigel Poulton, I would confirm the following.

The Watton-at-Stone Parish Council has no objection to your proposal to purchase an electronic scoreboard but unfortunately, as our budget for the current financial year has been agreed, there are no funds available towards this project from the Parish Council.

Can I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Parish Council, to wish you every success in your project.'

After discussion, it was agreed to write to Martin Tipper informing him that the Parish Council would be willing to purchase the electronic scoreboard (subject to the Cricket Club receiving the necessary funding) on the proviso that it receives a donation to cover the net cost of the invoice. **Action: J. Allsop**

c) Sabrina Lee – Community Hall hiring

Mr. Poulton said that Sabrina Lee (who hired the pavilion and kitchen on Sunday 21st May) had written a letter of complaint about the condition that the Community Hall facilities were in on her arrival.

The Clerk has returned half of the hiring fee (i.e. £7 instead of £14) to Sabrina Lee, as compensation for the inconvenience caused to her.

The Cricket Club was the last to use the facilities; during a Cricket Match held on Saturday 20th May. Mr. Knight has spoken to the Cricket Club about the incident and reminded them that they must clear up after using the facilities and cannot leave any rubbish in the Community Hall.

d) East Herts Council - Information session on the involvement of Parish and Town Council in the planning and development control process

Mr. Kevin Steptoe (Head of Development Control at East Herts Council) wrote on 12th May to ask if the Parish Council is interested in attending a planning information event and enclosed a questionnaire for completion.

It was agreed to complete the questionnaire stating that the Parish Council is interested in attending and suggesting that the Watton-at-Stone Community Hall could be used as the venue and invitations sent to neighbouring parishes (e.g. Datchworth, Aston, Benington, Walkern, Stapleford, etc.) **Action: J. Allsop**

e) HCC – Hertford and Ware Review of secondary provision

Lindsay Martin (Head of School Access and HCC) wrote on 8th June as follows.

Further to my letter of 21st October, 8th December 2005 and 21st February 2006 and the second meeting of stakeholders held on 27th February 2006, I write to update you on progress with this review of school provision.

The options which arose from the stakeholder consultation process included the potential of federation between some schools. Rather than proceed direct to public consultation on any of the options the Director Children Schools and Families decided that further time should be given for discussion with and between appropriate schools on the type and scale of possible collaborative arrangements.

Discussions are continuing and I will update you again by the end of term.'

10 Reports from other Organisations

• Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Watch

The Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Watch will be meeting on 22nd June in the Memorial Hall. PC Andy Woodward and PCSO Paul Weston will be attending the meeting.

All Parish Councillors are most welcome to attend.

11 Items for Parish News

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

• Gas-pipe replacement work in Hazeldell

Mr. Stock to write the entry accordingly.

Action: D. Stock

12 Accounts

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash

Receipts

None

Payments

None

Cheques required

Sports and Social Club	Donation towards sportsfield maintenance	315.00
Ted Brown	33 hours litterpick	214.50
HCC	Grants of £1000 from the Parish Council and East Herts Council	2000.00
Tim Clark	Strimming work on Parish Council land at Rivershill	70.00
Adam Welch	Grass cutting	525.00
Frank Cooper & son	May sportsfield grass cutting	126.90
Ted Brown	Clear Rivershill footpath	30.00
Ted Brown	Strim around perimeter of sportsfield and MPPA	80.00
Ted Brown	33 hours litterpick	214.50
J. Allsop	June salary	559.05
J. Allsop	Phone charges to 03.06.06	25.00
Supplies Team	2 ink cartridges for printer/scan/fax machine	70.16
Community Hall	½ year grant	2250.00
St. Albans Diocesan Board	½ year Allotment rent	300.00
		<u>6780.11</u>

Cheques received

East Herts Council	Grant towards Lammas Street lighting	1000.00
East Herts Council	½ year precept payment	12753.00
		<u>13753.00</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash

Receipts

Jim Keen – Main Hall	80.00
Jo Gillet – Pavilion hire	21.00
Sabrina Lee – Pavilion hire	14.00
Gill Gilbey – Main Hall hire	<u>28.00</u>
	<u>143.00</u>

Payments

2 pairs of rubber gloves	3.00
Sabrina Lee – pavilion hire refund	<u>7.00</u>
Banked	<u>133.00</u>
	<u>143.00</u>

Cheques required

Rosemary Brown	19 hours cleaning at the Community Hall	114.00
McCash and Hay	Annual audit	109.27
Rosemary Brown	22 hours cleaning at the Community Hall	132.00
David Bunyan	Re sewage leak on sportsfield	<u>58.75</u>
		<u>414.02</u>

Cheques received

Anna Bramley	Pavilion hire	28.00
Anne Shapcott	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	60.00
Natalie Emus	Pavilion hire	21.00
Conservative Association	Pavilion hire	40.00
River Bean Restoration Assoc.	Pavilion hire	14.00
Liz Welch	Main Hall hire	140.40
Mrs. H. Hargood	Pavilion hire	<u>28.00</u>
		<u>331.40</u>

Mr. Smith proposed that the Parish Council approve the above payments, Mr. Knight seconded the motion, and all present were in favour.

- **The meeting closed at 2030.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 12th July 2006.**