

**Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2010**

Present: Mr. J. Meischke (Chairman) Mr. M. Smith (Vice-Chairman)  
 Mr. D. Filer Mr. I. Knight  
 Mrs. H. McCash Mr. D. Stock  
 The Clerk (Mrs. J. Allsop)

Public: None

**1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. C. Clark, Mrs. C. Dinnin, Mr. I. Harris and Mr. N. Poulton.

**2 Public Participation**

None.

**3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report**

Mr. Meischke had three additional items for this meeting.

- Report from Mr. Smith on the CPRE Hertfordshire Skills Seminar this will be discussed under item 7 c, Specific items.
- Letter from Rumball Sedgwick re Glebe Lane, this will be discussed under item 9 l, Correspondence received.
- Letter from, Barry Lee, 1 Hockerill this will be discussed under item 9 m, Correspondence received.

**4 Declaration of Interests**

- Mrs. McCash declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 6a ii, planning application, Watton Place Clinic. (Mrs. McCash works for Watton Place Clinic, however she has no business or personal dealings with the planning applicant, Mr. R. Chauhan).
- Mr. Filer declared a personal interest in item 7b, specific items - ferreting (Mr. Filer's son-in-Law, Peter Phillips, has applied to the Parish Council for a ferreting licence).

**5 Minutes of the last meeting**

**a) Acceptance**

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2010**  
 Mr. Knight 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**

- **When installed, check new gatepost on Allotments**  
 Mrs. McCash said that the new gatepost has not been installed.  
 Mrs. McCash to monitor the situation. **Action: H. McCash**  
 Mr. Meischke to inspect the work when it has been done. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Arrange for the safe disposal of all the IT and computer equipment in the loft:** completed.
- **Place on circulation Mr. Poulton's report on the Community Voice public meeting and associated literature:** completed.
- **Write to planning department re Bardolphs Farm, Ware Road:** completed.
- **Discuss ferreting areas with Mr. R. Adams and Mr. Peter Phillips**  
 Refer to item 7b, Specific items - Ferreting Licenses.
- **Renew the ferreting licenses for Mr. R. Adams**  
 Refer to item 7b, Specific items - Ferreting Licenses.
- **Issue ferreting licenses to Mr. Peter Phillips**  
 Refer to item 7b, Specific items - Ferreting Licenses.
- **Draft letter to Miss Hodgson re ferreting:** completed.  
 No response has been received from Miss Hodgson.
- **Renew licence for Temporary Access across the Land known as the "Old Cottage Site":** completed.
- **Write to Hertfordshire Highways requesting two additional salt bins for the village:** completed.
- **Obtain revised quotation from Suffolk Acre to include the increased cover required:** completed.  
 Suffolk Acre's revised quotations were £2,659.81 for a three-year undertaking and £2,791.91 for a one-year undertaking.
- **Agree accepting Community Hall insurance quotation**  
 A quotation of £1469.88 from Norris Fisher Insurance Brokers Limited has been accepted for a three-year undertaking (the cost of a one-year undertaking was £1633.21). The insurers are Ansvar Insurance.

- **Arrange for the Parish Council accounts to be audited by Jim Morrissey**  
The Clerk will take the Parish Council accounts to Jim Morrissey for auditing on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> May.  
**Action: J. Allsop**
  - **Arrange for the Community Hall accounts to be audited by McCash and Hay: outstanding.**  
**Action: J. Allsop**
  - **Put a monthly reminder on the Google calendar for Mr. Poulton to read Gas meter:** completed.  
Mr. Meischke read out an e-mail (dated 6<sup>th</sup> April) sent to the complaints department at Npower by Mr. Poulton. Although the past winter has been exceptionally cold, the Community Hall gas bills have been unreasonably high. Mr. Poulton has tried to contact the business section at Npower on numerous occasions but they are always either unavailable to take calls or don't call back when they say they will.
  - **Open a new deposit account to be called 'Community Hall Tennis Court Fund':** completed.
  - **Write to Mr. Evernden re hedge cuttings on the allotments**  
Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Update on Kimberley hedge cuttings left on Allotments.
  - **Obtain three quotations for the clearing and cultivation work required on the allotments**  
Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Allotments quotation for cultivation and clearance work.
  - **Ask Ted Brown to clear the litter on Mill Lane:** completed and the work has been done.
  - **Ask East Herts Council to clear the litter on Station Road:** completed.
  - **Inspect footpath 17**  
Mr. Meischke said that Mr. Poulton had picked up some litter on footpath 17; however most of the litter problem is on the school land. Mr. Poulton has agreed to contact the school. **Action: N. Poulton**
  - **Ask Hertfordshire Highways to fill the empty or partially full salt bins:** completed.
  - **Mr. Poulton to rake the gravel around the War Memorial:** completed.
  - **Ask Brian Bunyan to varnish the ornate village sign**  
Both Mr. Meischke and the Clerk have spoken to Brian Bunyan, who agreed to do the work as soon as the temperature is warm enough to allow the varnish to dry.
  - **Make further enquiries re village history entry for the website**  
Refer to item 8 b iv, Routine Reports - Website.
  - **Inform East Herts Council that the Clerk will attend Customer Service Briefing:** completed.
  - **Speak to Malcolm Amey (East Herts Council) about Oak tree in sportsfield hedge**  
Refer to item 9 k, Correspondence received - East Herts Council – Oak tree in sportsfield hedge opposite 10 School Lane.
  - **Chase East Herts Council for a response re planning decision for 103 Great Innings South**  
Refer to item 9 k, Correspondence received - Letter from East Herts Council re Planning permission at 103 Great Innings South.
  - **Return one signed copy to Rumball Sedgwick letter re new Allotments lease:** completed.
  - **Chase Hertfordshire Highways for a response to our letter re street lighting costs:** completed.  
Mr. Meischke said that Mark Fells (Strategy Development Manger, Hertfordshire Highways) e-mailed on 12<sup>th</sup> April in response to the Parish Council's letter asking how the changes in street lighting will affect Watton-at-Stone and in particular, the energy and lighting costs.  
Mr. Meischke said it would be best for all Parish Councillors to read the e-mail themselves and discuss this item at the May Parish Council meeting. **Agenda: 05/10**  
The Clerk to forward Mark Fells e-mail to all Parish Councillors.
  - **Attend Launch of Hertfordshire Policing Plan 2010/13 on 29<sup>th</sup> March**  
Mr. Filer was unable to attend the launch of the Hertfordshire Policing Plan because he was unwell. .
  - **Attend East Herts Council Rural Parish Conference on 10<sup>th</sup> June**  
This item to remain on the agenda under review of actions. **Action: C. Dinnin**
  - **Write Parish News entries:** completed.
- c) **Action points outstanding for more than two months**
- **Inspect Whempstead notice board to decide how best to repair it:** outstanding.  
**Action: J. Meischke/ C. Clark**

## 6 Planning

Mr. Stock reported on the following items.

### a) Applications

#### i) Watton Methodist Church, High Street (3/10/0444/FP)

New side entrance with ramp, single storey side and rear extension and vestry extension and surfacing of existing grass parking area to rear of church

Mr. Stock said that this application was similar to that previously refused by the planning department on quality grounds. He explained the revised plans and said that he could see no reason for us to object.

After reviewing the plans, all Parish Councillors present agreed that the Clerk writes to East Herts Council to inform them that we have no comment on this application. **Action: J. Allsop**

**ii) Watton Place Clinic, 60, High Street (3/10/0525/LB)**

Installation of air conditioning condenser unit on external south east facing wall linked to fan unit in FF Surgery. 390x635x305 external wall unit fixed to rendered wall, adjacent to chimney and pipes fed through roof space to fan unit in FF surgery

Mr. Stock explained the reason for this application together with the details of the locations of the equipment involved. He also said that the application-package included a letter from Mr. R. Abel Smith who stated that he had no objection to the installation of an air conditioning condenser on the outside of the building subject to planning consent being granted by East Herts Council. Mr. Stock could not see any reason for us to object.

After reviewing the plans, all Parish Councillors present (with the exception of Mrs. McCash, who took no part in the discussion) agreed that that the Clerk writes to East Herts Council to inform them that we have no comment on this application. **Action: J. Allsop**

**b) Decisions**

None

**c) Appeal Decision**

**i) Land East of Walkern Road and North and West of High Elms Lane, Benington**

3 no. wind turbines of up to 119m in height, a permanent meteorological mast, substation, access tracks and ancillary infrastructure - Planning Inspectorate - Appeal dismissed

Mr. Stock said that he was sure he was expressing the view of all Parish Councillors when saying that he was very pleased with the appeal decision. All Parish Councillors present agreed with this and said that the report was very well written.

**7 Specific items**

**a) Claim for vandalised bench seat**

The Beadle family have now installed the replacement bench seat near Watkins Hall Farm. They have also installed a post at both ends of the bench for extra protection.

Mr. Meischke to write a letter of thanks to Alan Beadle.

**Action: J. Meischke**

**b) Ferreting**

Mr. Meischke said he had spoken with Bob Adams, who would like Peter Phillips to be solely responsible for ferreting Watton Green and agreed to share the ferreting of the Lammas.

Mr. Meischke proposed that the following licences be issued .

- **Bob Adams (of 4 Glebe Close)** to ferret the Lammas, the paddock at the far end of the Lammas, and the Allotments.
- **Peter Phillips (of 18 Lammas Road)** to ferret Watton Green and the Lammas.

Mr. Phillips to be informed that no more than two persons to ferret on licensed land at any one time.

Mr. Adams and Mr. Phillips, who know each other, to liaise over the ferreting of the Lammas.

Mr. Knight seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Ferreting licences to be issued accordingly.

**Action: J. Meischke**

Peter Phillips will also be required to give an annual performance report.

**c) The planning system and how it works?**

Mr. Smith attended the CPRE run seminar on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2010 and gave his report as follows.

‘This was an all day seminar covering the planning system from its inception in 1947 to the current time when local authorities are developing their Local Development Frameworks (LDF).

Two pieces of legislation have been introduced more recently to streamline the planning system.

One is the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), of which ours is the Eastern Region, which aims to better plan and co-ordinate overarching policy within government requirements.

The other is the Major Infrastructure Project legislation, which aims to enable projects of national importance to be fast tracked through the system reducing the lead in time to years rather than decades.

Local authorities are charged with developing their LDFs, where they fail to do so RSS policies may override local plans.

EHDC plans to have its Core strategy in place and adopted by 2013. As it has only recently adopted its revised Local Plan it has been allowed to save many of its policies for inclusion in its LDF . Other policies have been dropped where they have been superseded (refer to recent circulation papers). The current LDF should be in place until 2031.

We will see PPGs (Planning Policy Guidance) gradually being replaced by PPSs (Planning Policy Statements), a subtle but significant change of emphasis.

It is also unlikely that Parish Plans will be included as a document in the LDF.

My conclusion is that, in proportion to our influence, we should continue to comment on applications and proposals based on our common sense views. Only when we wish to be more robust should we start to back up our views with reference to policies in which case we may need professional advice, unless any councillor wishes to take on a full time role in that area.'

## 8 Reports

### a) Sub-Committees

#### Budget & Finance

Mr. Filer reported on the following items.

- **Monthly accounts**

All Parish Councillors present were given a copy of the monthly accounts.

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

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

Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of the draft Parish Council and Community Hall statement of accounts for the year ending the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010.

Mr. Filer explained that the accounts were draft only because the end of year bank statements have not yet been received. He went through the expenditure and income items for both the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts and explained the variations in the statements.

The Community Hall account has surplus reserves approaching £20,000. Mr. Filer said we should be aware that this is a very high reserve. However, the Community Hall Trustees do have some large long-term capital expenditure items. For example: the resurfacing of the MPPA and new sports flooring for the Main Hall and blinds for the Pavilion.

Parish Councillors agreed that the long-term capital expenditure items needed reviewing because they had not been updated since November 2007.

Mr. Filer said that the Parish Council needs to be very careful about the amount of money they leave in reserve and they could consider giving a grant to the new tennis court fund of £1000.

It was agreed to put the 'Estimated long-term capital expenditure items' on the June 2010 Parish Council agenda.

**Agenda: June 2010**

The Clerk to e-mail all Parish Councillors a copy of the November 2007 long-term capital expenditure items.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Summary of 12-monthly statement of accounts for the year ended 2009/10**

The Clerk cannot produce the summary 12-monthly statement of accounts until the end-of-year bank statements have arrived.

All Parish Councillors to be e-mailed a copy of the summary 12-monthly statement of accounts for the Parish Council and Community Hall for the year ending the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 prior to the Annual Parish meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> May.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Asset register**

The Clerk to e-mail Mr. Meischke and Mr. Poulton the current version of the Asset register for updating.

**Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Meischke and Mr. Poulton to update the Asset register for approval at the June 2010 Parish Council meeting.

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

**Agenda: June 2010**

- **Annual Return of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010**

BDO Stoy Hayward LLP wrote on 30<sup>th</sup> March informing us of the details for the annual audit for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010. The public inspection period starts on 10<sup>th</sup> May and ends on 7<sup>th</sup> June (notices advertising the inspection period need to be displayed from 26<sup>th</sup> April to 9<sup>th</sup> May inclusive), the completed Annual Return and all relevant documentation needs to be sent to BDO Stoy Hayward LLP by 11<sup>th</sup> June 2010.

- **Parish Council insurance**

The Parish Council insurance is up for renewal on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2010. Mr. Filer said that our current insurers are Came and Company.

Norris and Fisher and Allied Westminster, who provided insurance quotations for the Community Hall, are unable to provide a quotation for the Parish Council insurance. However, both companies hoped they would be in a position to do so next year.

It was agreed to obtain quotations from Came and Company, Allianz and Suffolk ACRE Insurance Services for discussion at the May Parish Council meeting.

**Action: J. Allsop**

The Clerk to e-mail the Clerk's from Benington, Datchworth and Tewin to obtain the names of alternative insurers.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Community Hall rates notice for 2010/11**

Mr. Filer said that the rate demand is down from £ 1091.25 to £1076.40. The Community Hall benefits from an 80% rate relief.

### Community Hall Trustees

In the absence of Mr. Poulton, Mr. Stock reported on the following items.

- **Minutes of meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2010**

Mr. Stock proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by Mr. Meischke. Mr. Knight seconded the motion and Mr. Meischke was in favour.

- **Replacement of Exterior Door at the car park side of the building**

Brian Bunyan hopes to fit the new external door in the next month.

Mr. Meischke showed Parish Councillors a lock Michael Lewis (A. P. Access) had suggested as an alternative style of entrance lock for the exterior door, in place of the current crash-bar with locking system. This alternative lock would be fitted in a similar manner as a standard door lock, but has a crash button on the inside of the door to allow emergency exit. This type of lock is much more secure and more reliable than the type currently fitted on the exterior door. The approximate cost of the new lock is £250 - £300.

Mr. Meischke proposed that the new style of lock be fitted. Mr. Filer seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Mr. Lewis and Mr. Bunyan would liaise over the fitting of the lock.

Mr. Meischke to notify them accordingly.

**Action: J. Meischke**

- After reviewing the minutes, Mr. Stock proposed that the following recommendations be accepted by the Parish Council. Mr. Smith seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

- **Regular hirer and keys**

**Recommendation:** The Parish Council agrees to the Tennis Club's request for keys to gain access to the changing rooms and the internal toilets, and that a key-holder agreement is issued accordingly. The Tennis Club will be sent an invoice to pay for the keys required.

**Recommendation:** The Parish Council agrees to Dave Boddy's request for keys to the Community Hall and a key-holder agreement is issued accordingly. Dave Boddy will be sent an invoice to pay for the keys required.

**Recommendation:** The Parish Council agrees that Mr. Dunhill signs a key-holder agreement so that he can use Mr. Stock's keys (in his absence) to gain access to the Sports Hall on Badminton Club nights only. These keys will be taken from the set held by Mr. Stock as a Trustee of the Community Hall.

Mr. Filer expressed his concern that so many sets of keys are out of the control of the Parish Council. Mr. Stock agreed and said that he had expressed such concerns many times in the past. However, he did accept that this could not be avoided without us having a caretaker.

Mr. Meischke agreed and said that there is no other reasonable alternative for providing access to the Community Hall by regular hirers.

- **British Gas – electricity**

**Recommendation:** Based on the problems experienced on switching the Community Hall gas usage from British Gas to Npower, the Community Hall Trustees recommend that the Parish Council authorise that the electricity supply remains with British Gas. Especially in view of the fact that the unit charge offered in the new contract is lower than the current price paid.

- **Casual hire and regular hirers agreement**

**Recommendation:** The following addition to be made to the casual hirers agreement as a new item 1.

‘Whenever there are children present at an event in the Community Hall or sportsfield, the hirer shall appoint a person responsible for their protection.’

- **Sports and Social Club hire agreement**

The following additions to be made to the ‘Annual Agreement for the use of specified Sports Facilities within the Village’, directly after the first two bullet points.

**Recommendation:** The following two items are applicable to both parts 1 and 2 of the agreement.

1. The Sports and Social Club is responsible for any insurance required to cover the loss or theft of its equipment or property kept within or around the Community Hall building.
2. Whenever there are children present at an event in the Community Hall or sportsfield, the hirer shall appoint a person responsible for their protection.

Item 10 under Pavilion to be deleted, namely: ‘The Sports and Social Club is responsible for any insurance required to cover the loss or theft of its equipment or property kept within or around the Community Hall building.’

- **Anti-social behaviour of footballers**

This subject was raised as a result of a complaint from a member of the public.

The current problem of anti-social behaviour of football players and their supporters was discussed in details. Sympathy for others using the facilities was appreciated, however it was agreed that resolving the problem was going to be difficult.

Mr. Knight said that the Football Association take a dim view of players swearing at the referee and other officials, but don't take much notice when players swear at each other.

It was agreed to discuss this item again at the September Parish Council meeting with a view to possibly:

- contacting the Football Association in September advising them of the problem
- contacting our PCSO asking her to get involved
- putting up posters (in the changing room and corridor areas) at the start of the football season, asking players to refrain from anti-social behaviour that could cause offense to members of the public, e.g. mothers and children using the adjacent play area.

**Agenda: 09/10**

**Recommendation:** The Parish Council writes to the Sports and Social Club asking them to address the anti-social language problem.

Mrs. McCash said she had been very upset by the language used by the players during the football match on Remembrance Sunday because it could be heard during and immediately after the service. She therefore suggested that future games should be banned or delayed on Remembrance Day.

Agreement was not reached by Parish Councillors present. Mr. Knight said that he would refer this subject to the Sports and Social Club at the start of the next football season. **Action: I. Knight**

- **Replace six strip lights in the Sports Hall**

Mr. Lewis is not interested in replacing the strip lights in the Sports Hall because he has no official safety-training to use a high-level tower on wheels and therefore would not be insured.

Mr. Meischke said that Mr. Poulton had obtained a verbal quotation from RKA Services, who installed the window winder mechanism in the Main Hall and are prepared to change the strip lights, for £300 provided we supply the light tubes.

Mr. Stock proposed that we accept RKA Services quotation and replace all of the lighting tubes in the Main Hall because they could all be reaching the end of their lives. Mr. Filer seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

**Action: N. Poulton**

- **Request to erect a ball stopper from the Cricket Club**

Mr. Stock said that a recent meeting of the Sports and Social Club it appeared to be unclear as to whether or not the Cricket Club would be erecting a ball-stopper barrier.

- **Monitor Cricket Club use of small changing rooms to store their equipment**

At the September 2009 meeting, it was reported that Dave Boddy had complained that one of the small changing rooms was full of Cricket gear. It was agreed at that meeting not to raise this issue with the Cricket Club until the start of the 2010 season and that only referee's coats were allowed to be left in the small changing rooms.

Mr. Knight said the Cricket Club had cleared all their gear from the small changing room and Parish Councillors agreed that the Trustees should monitor the situation this season.

- **6-monthly check of the MPPA, Play Area on sportsfield, Community Hall equipment and seats in the village**

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke completed the 6-monthly check on 9<sup>th</sup> April.

Mr. Meischke reported on the adverse items highlighted in the 6-monthly check.

- **Community Hall blinds:** these will need replacing soon.
- **First aid box:** valid until 2013.
- **Loft ladder, car park side:** repairs carried-out to loft ladder used by Dave Boddy.

- **Kicker board:** nearest to sportsfield and past the gate needs securing. **Action: I. Knight/N. Poulton**  
Money needs to go into the 2011/12 budget for painting the kicker boards. **Budget: 2011/12**  
Mr. Knight to write a specification for the painting and any repair work required to the kicker-boards.

**Action: I. Knight**

Mrs. McCash asked Mr. Knight to e-mail her the specification so that she could pass it on to someone she knows who may be interested in quoting to do the work. **Action: I. Knight/H. McCash**

- **Bench seats**

- The bench seat at the North end of the High Street near the bus stop has a bottom slat missing and is not repairable.
- The bench seat near Mill Lane has three slats missing off the back and needs attention.

Mr. Meischke and Mr. Poulton to agree what action should be taken. **Action: J. Meischke**

## Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **New Tennis Court**

The final preparation of the COMMA grant application form will commence this week.

**Action: I. Knight/N. Poulton**

Mr. Knight was pleased to report that after three months of chasing, Rumball Sedgwick wrote on 12<sup>th</sup> April as follows.

**‘Glebe land - Watton-at-Stone**

I confirm that the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council has a lease of the Recreation Ground as shown edged blue on the attached plan and that the St. Albans Diocesan Board of Finance Glebe Committee has agreed, subject to contract, to grant a lease of the land edged in red to the Parish Council, in order that the Parish Council can extend sports facilities on to this land.

I trust that this letter provides you with the information you require to assist in your grant application and fundraising.’

An application has been made to County Councillor Bryan Hammond for a £1,000 grant from his Locality Budget.

£8,000 of Tennis club funds have been paid into the Watton-at-Stone Community Hall Tennis Court Fund account. The Clerk to obtain a bank statement from Alliance and Leicester, which will be included with the COMMA grant application. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Sportsfield**

Mr. Knight and Mr. Smith have had further discussions with Frank Cooper and Son who have been commissioned to do the sportsfield maintenance work. The cost of the work will be approximately £300 less than was originally budgeted at around £774. The work is scheduled to begin during the week commencing 19<sup>th</sup> April.

## Environment Sub-Committee

In the absence of Mrs. Dinnin, Mr. Smith reported on the following items.

- **Allotments**

- **Update on Kimberley hedge cuttings left on Allotments**

The Clerk has spoken to Peter Evernden who agreed to arrange for his hedge cuttings to be removed from the allotments.

- **Allotments quotation for cultivation and clearance work**

Three quotations have been obtained for the cultivation and clearance work on the allotment.

- Adam Welch £580
- Bluebury – contractors £450 plus VAT
- Tony Beach £400

Due to other work commitments, Blue Bury Contractors can no longer do the work.

After discussion, it was agreed that Mrs. Dinnin should ask Tony Beach if he has up-to-date public liability insurance, and if he does accept his quotation. If Mr. Beach does not have public liability insurance, Adam Welch’s quotation to be accepted. **Action: C. Dinnin**

- **Section of fence down on Chestnuts boundary**

This section of fencing has now been repaired.

- **Overhanging branches along his section of the river bank footpath**

The Parish Council wrote to Mr. Abel Smith about the branches overhanging the river on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2009 and received a reply (dated 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2009) stating: “I note what you say about branches

allegedly overhanging the footpath that runs between the Lammas and the Walkern Road. I will have a look at it and assess it for myself.”

It was agreed that the Environment Agency should contact Mr. Abel Smith if the trees need cutting back and this is not a Parish Council issue. No further action to be taken.

- **Logs on Watton Green and Lammas**

Malcolm Oakman has expressed an interest in any logs that come available for his log burner.

Mrs. Dinnin has sent him down to the Lammas to inspect the logs.

The logs at Watton Green are very charred and not suitable for burning. Mrs. Dinnin has suggested that Ted Brown could cut up the logs and put them on the side of the green. Mr. Smith said that Blue Bury Contractors will move the logs when he is next doing work at Watton Green. **Action: M. Smith**

- **Rubbish bin on the Lammas**

The rubbish bin on the footpath from Walkern Road, which runs along the top of the Lammas bank, is down. Parish Councillors asked if we need a bin on the Lammas and who empties it. Mrs. McCash said that she empties the bin approximately once a fortnight or as and when needed. During the winter months, not much rubbish is collected; however, it is much used during the summer months.

Mr. Smith agreed to reinstate the bin.

**Action: M. Smith**

**b) Routine reports**

- i) **Fire-alarm test**

The fire-alarm was tested by Mr. Poulton this afternoon.

- ii) **Monthly village-report**

Mrs. McCash completed the report on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2010.

Only the adverse items highlighted in the monthly village-report are minuted.

- **Molehills on the sportsfield:** It was agreed to ask Fred Burnell to deal with the mole problem on the sportsfield. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Weeds pushing through Children’s play area safety surface by the two spring sit-ons:** Mr. Meischke to ask Ted Brown to weed kill this area. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Swings seats:** It was agreed to monitor the large splits in the swing seats.
- **Swings - paintwork:** Mr. Meischke to inspect the paintwork, which Mrs. McCash highlighted as in poor condition. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **See saw:** The see-saw squeaks, no action to be taken at this time.
- **Allotments:** Good apart from the debris left on site when the Kimberley hedges were cut.
- **Mill Lane looked unsightly:** This is not a Parish Council responsibility.
- **Salt bins:** Two bins need filling. Hertfordshire Highways have been asked to fill the salt bins before the coming winter.
- **Ornate sign:** Brian Bunyan is scheduled to do the work as soon as the weather allows.

- iii) **Weekly sportsfield-report and action**

None.

- iv) **Website**

Mr. Stock said that Vernon Dunhill has agreed to write the ‘history of Watton-at-Stone’ part of the website.

Mr. Dunhill already has a fair amount of input available from the Village Guide. Mr. Meischke and Mr. Poulton have also agreed to forward him other information they have on the history of Watton-at-Stone.

Mr. Stock suggested a recollections section for the website may be of interest at some time. In which case, Parishioners would be encouraged to submit their personal memories of events/changes that have happened in the village. Mr. Stock said he would be happy to put this section together and write an entry for the Parish News to gauge the interest. The elderly in the village could have good input to this section and thus ensure that valuable memories of the village are not lost.

- v) **Website diary**

Problem with offensive language used by footballers and their supporters to be put on the Google Calendar for September. This item to be discussed at the September Parish Council meeting. **Action: J. Allsop**  
**Agenda: 09/10**

Put reminder to contact Hertfordshire Highways if the salt bins have not been filled by September on the Google Calendar. **Action: J. Allsop**



## 9 Correspondence received

### a) Letter from Michael Freeman

Mr. Meischke read out a letter dated 15<sup>th</sup> March from Mike Freeman as follows.

I am in the middle of the bi-annual litterpick in the village and would be grateful if I could make the following suggestions/observations with a view to maintaining the tidy appearance of the village:

1. Could we trim the hedge which runs along the Station Road side of Hazeldell and the hedge on the corner of the road leading to the Oil Storage depot? If we could the overall appearance of the hedges would improve and it would be harder for litter to be thrown or blown into them
2. The bench in Station Road backing onto Hazeldell appear to become a favoured spot for drinkers, judging by the number of alcopops and cider cans recovered from there.
3. Last year there was a substantial trail of vodka bottles and beer cans leading from the Stevenage roundabout to the high Street. I have not cleared that end yet, so cannot say if the problem persists, but there is a similar trail of vodka bottles and beer cans now leading from the Railway Station past the Oil Storage depot (and into the unruly hedge) as well as along Clappers Lane (which I have also yet to clear).

Could points 2 and 3 be brought to the attention of PC Andy Woodward and his team? This is undoubtedly youths but I am not sure about the second.

4. The land behind the Railways Stain platforms is a disgrace and I doubt if Network Rail have plans to clear it any time soon. Can the Council please approach Network Rail for permission for me to enter that land to do the necessary (I believe I would otherwise be trespassing).
5. Long term, would the Parish Council be prepared to promote a litter awareness programme in the village, along the lines of '(a) don't drop litter and (b) if we all pick up one item a day we wouldn't have a problem?'

There are of course many deep-seated causes of this problem (e.g. allowing McDonalds to trade in this country in the first place, as half of the rubbish I recover come from their shops) and we cannot hope to address them all but I believe the above would help, and I would welcome the Council's views.

With kind regards,

Mr. Meischke read out an e-mail from Mr. Poulton.

'I thought it might be helpful if I commented on Mike's letter

Item 1: the trimming of the hedge along Station Road is down to East Herts Council. I doubt if they would trim the hedge now, as it is the bird nesting season but we could ask.

Items 2 and 3: As Mike says, this is a police matter and we need to contact PC Andy Woodward.

Item 4: I note Mike's comments re the rubbish on the platform. I have been trying for ages to get this rubbish removed and I will forward to you shortly my e-mails re this rubbish.

I did volunteer Ted Brown for this work but our dear friend Health and Safety won't allow anyone onto or near their property unless they are employed by First Capital Connect.

Item 5: I think Mike's idea to promote a litter awareness programme is excellent.'

Mrs. McCash agreed to speak to PC Andy Woodward re items 2 and 3 of Mike Freeman's letter.

**Action: H. McCash**

Parish Councillors agreed that they were happy to promote litter awareness programme in anyway they could, which could include leaflets to go out with Parish News or posters on the Parish Council notice boards.

However, there might be difficulties in promoting a litterpick day because of Health and Safety issues. In the past both the Scout and Guides and students from Heath Mount school have done a litterpick in the village. However, because of the current Health and Safety law, children can no longer take part in activities such as a litterpick. The Parish Council could possibly run an adult only event or encourage voluntary litterpicking.

This item to be placed on the May Parish Council agenda.

**Agenda: 05/10**

Mr. Meischke to write to Mike Freeman accordingly.

**Action: J. Meischke**

### b) County Councillor Brian Hammond re funding from the Locality Budget

County Councillor Brian Hammond wrote on 30<sup>th</sup> March to advise us that funding from his Locality Budget will be available for 2010/11. As mentioned under item 8a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee – New Tennis Court, the Tennis Club are applying for a £1000 towards the building of the new Tennis Court.

### c) Temporary Events and open license applications

The Licensing department at East Herts Council is e-mailing all temporary events and open license applications to the Parish Council. It was agreed that the Clerk only forward these e-mails to Parish Councillors when they include events in our parish.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**d) Small Business Engagement Accord and Parish Council opt in?**

Mr. Meischke read out part of an e-mail, dated 15<sup>th</sup> March from Julia Warren (the Clerk to Wheathampstead Parish Council).

Our local traders' association has requested that the Parish Council sign up to something called the "Small Business Engagement Accord". This has been drawn up by the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) as part of their 'Keep it Local' campaign and is a voluntary code of practice for local authorities. The principal behind this is that it aims to encourage a more productive dialogue between local authorities and the small businesses operating within their area of influence. The traders' assoc believes that by signing up to this accord it will help the PC keep in touch with the local business community and that this will therefore help the local businesses. The Small Business Engagement Accord appears to fit well with the aims of the Village Plan - which identified 50% of respondents prioritising shops and businesses and was the number one priority.

Parish Councillors agreed not to opt in to the Small Business Engagement Accord.

**e) Subscription to DIS (Direct Information Service)**

The Parish Council used to receive DIS free of charge approximately 15 years ago as part of their NALC membership.

'DIS continues to provide a fortnightly one stop shop for all the latest news and information which is relevant to your sector. With a round up of government statements and publications, up to date legal information, ministerial statements, press releases and consultations from across the sector, along with regular events and vacancy listings, DIS is a great source of information.'

The annual subscription rate for non-NALC members is £135 plus VAT (£90 plus VAT for NALC members).

Parish Councillors agreed not to subscribe to DIS.

**f) East Herts Council – Changes to the frequency of dog bin emptying for 2010/11**

Ian Sharratt (Environmental Services Manager at East Herts Council) wrote on 19<sup>th</sup> March about the changes being made to the dog-bin emptying schedule from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010. The bin emptying is being reduced from 76 times a year to 65 times a year.

Previously the bins were emptied twice a week in summer and one a week over winter. The changes are being made to the spring and autumn collections which are reduced from twice to once a week.

The financial implications of the changes will be passed to the Parish Council in our 2010/11 invoice.

The Parish Council will monitor the fullness of dog bins in view of the changes.

**g) CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England – Annual Subscription**

The annual CPRE subscription for 2010/11 is £29 (the same as for 2009/10).

Mr. Smith proposed that we renew our CPRE membership. Mr. Knight seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**h) Letter from East Herts Council re Planning permission at 103 Great Innings South**

The Clerk to e-mail East Herts Council letter (dated 22<sup>nd</sup> March) to all Parish Councillors. **Action: J. Allsop**

**i) East Herts Council – Local Plan – ‘Saved Policies**

This item is currently on circulation.

**j) Letter from Bob Adams**

Mr. Meischke read out the following letter from Bob Adams, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

'I would like to apply once again, to the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council for a licence to ferret the following areas as I have done in previous seasons.

Watton Green

The Allotments

The Lammas and the paddock at the far end of the Lammas

These are the figures of rabbits and rats caught last season.

	Rabbits	Rats
Lammas	89	4
Lammas Paddock	32	0
Watton Green	11	0
Allotments	12	5'

**k) East Herts Council – Oak tree in sportsfield hedge opposite 10 School Lane**

Malcolm Amey, East Herts Council, has copied the Parish Council with a letter he sent to Dr. Norden (dated 7<sup>th</sup> April) agreeing to the removal of the Oak tree in the sportsfield hedge. A replacement broadleaf tree is to be planted in a suitable location elsewhere on the sportsfield (Mr. Amey enclosed with his letter a list of suitable trees).

Dr. Norden e-mailed Mr. Poulton, on 9<sup>th</sup> April, agreeing to pay for all reasonable costs for the removal of the tree, reinstatement of the sportsfield hedge and planting of a new tree.

After discussion about the siting of the new tree, it was agreed to contact Malcolm Amey asking for his advice about the best location and type of tree. **Action: N. Poulton**

Mr. Poulton to obtain quotations for the removal of the Oak tree. **Action: N. Poulton**

Additional planting required in the sportsfield hedge to be discussed when the Oak tree has been removed.

**l) Rumball Sedgwick re Glebe Lane**

Refer to item 8 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee – New Tennis Court.

**m) Letter from Barry Lee, 1 Hockerill**

Mr. Meischke read out a letter from Barry Lee (1, Hockerill) complaining about cars parking on the public footpath opposite his gated driveway, which prevents him from getting his own car out of his driveway. Sometimes the cars park all night in this position. During school collection times cars often park across his gates.

Mrs. McCash agreed to pass Mr. Lee’s letter to PC Andy Woodward and will liaise with Mr. Meischke about a written response to Mr. Lee. **Action: H. McCash**

**10 Village organisations**

- **Watton Youth Drop Inn:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone School Governors:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Watch**  
Mrs. McCash said that she is meeting with PC Andy Woodward tomorrow (14<sup>th</sup> April) to discuss concerns about policing in Watton-at-Stone. The new PCSO has been very disappointing and has done nothing for the village. She never does walkabouts and just drives through Watton-at-Stone.  
PC Andy Woodward and PCSO Sally Brooks failed to turn up for the Neighbourhood Watch - Street Briefing at the Watton-at-Stone Community Hall on 26<sup>th</sup> March, because they forgot. Mrs. McCash said that Watton-at-Stone was well looked after when Paul Weston was PCSO for the village.
- **Watton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone War Memorial Hall Management Committee:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Pre-School Playgroup:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Scout & Guide Group:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Sports & Social Club:** Nothing to report.
- **Police Authority:** Nothing to report.
- **River Beane Restoration Association:** Nothing to report.

**11 Items for Parish News**

No items were identified for inclusion in the May 2010 issue of the Parish News.

- **The meeting closed at 2128.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2010.**

**Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2010**

Present: Mr. J. Meischke (Chairman) Mr. M. Smith (Vice-Chairman)  
 Mr. D. Filer Mr. I. Knight  
 Mrs. H. McCash Mr. D. Stock  
 The Clerk (Mrs. J. Allsop)

Public: None

**1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. C. Clark, Mrs. C. Dinnin, Mr. I. Harris and Mr. N. Poulton.

**2 Public Participation**

None.

**3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report**

Mr. Meischke had three additional items for this meeting.

- Report from Mr. Smith on the CPRE Hertfordshire Skills Seminar this will be discussed under item 7 c, Specific items.
- Letter from Rumball Sedgwick re Glebe Lane, this will be discussed under item 9 l, Correspondence received.
- Letter from, Barry Lee, 1 Hockerill this will be discussed under item 9 m, Correspondence received.

**4 Declaration of Interests**

- Mrs. McCash declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 6a ii, planning application, Watton Place Clinic. (Mrs. McCash works for Watton Place Clinic, however she has no business or personal dealings with the planning applicant, Mr. R. Chauhan).
- Mr. Filer declared a personal interest in item 7b, specific items - ferreting (Mr. Filer's son-in-Law, Peter Phillips, has applied to the Parish Council for a ferreting licence).

**5 Minutes of the last meeting**

**a) Acceptance**

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2010**  
 Mr. Knight 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**

- **When installed, check new gatepost on Allotments**  
 Mrs. McCash said that the new gatepost has not been installed.  
 Mrs. McCash to monitor the situation. **Action: H. McCash**  
 Mr. Meischke to inspect the work when it has been done. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Arrange for the safe disposal of all the IT and computer equipment in the loft:** completed.
- **Place on circulation Mr. Poulton's report on the Community Voice public meeting and associated literature:** completed.
- **Write to planning department re Bardolphs Farm, Ware Road:** completed.
- **Discuss ferreting areas with Mr. R. Adams and Mr. Peter Phillips**  
 Refer to item 7b, Specific items - Ferreting Licenses.
- **Renew the ferreting licenses for Mr. R. Adams**  
 Refer to item 7b, Specific items - Ferreting Licenses.
- **Issue ferreting licenses to Mr. Peter Phillips**  
 Refer to item 7b, Specific items - Ferreting Licenses.
- **Draft letter to Miss Hodgson re ferreting:** completed.  
 No response has been received from Miss Hodgson.
- **Renew licence for Temporary Access across the Land known as the "Old Cottage Site":** completed.
- **Write to Hertfordshire Highways requesting two additional salt bins for the village:** completed.
- **Obtain revised quotation from Suffolk Acre to include the increased cover required:** completed.  
 Suffolk Acre's revised quotations were £2,659.81 for a three-year undertaking and £2,791.91 for a one-year undertaking.
- **Agree accepting Community Hall insurance quotation**  
 A quotation of £1469.88 from Norris Fisher Insurance Brokers Limited has been accepted for a three-year undertaking (the cost of a one-year undertaking was £1633.21). The insurers are Ansvar Insurance.

- **Arrange for the Parish Council accounts to be audited by Jim Morrissey**  
The Clerk will take the Parish Council accounts to Jim Morrissey for auditing on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> May.  
**Action: J. Allsop**
  - **Arrange for the Community Hall accounts to be audited by McCash and Hay: outstanding.**  
**Action: J. Allsop**
  - **Put a monthly reminder on the Google calendar for Mr. Poulton to read Gas meter:** completed.  
Mr. Meischke read out an e-mail (dated 6<sup>th</sup> April) sent to the complaints department at Npower by Mr. Poulton. Although the past winter has been exceptionally cold, the Community Hall gas bills have been unreasonably high. Mr. Poulton has tried to contact the business section at Npower on numerous occasions but they are always either unavailable to take calls or don't call back when they say they will.
  - **Open a new deposit account to be called 'Community Hall Tennis Court Fund':** completed.
  - **Write to Mr. Evernden re hedge cuttings on the allotments**  
Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Update on Kimberley hedge cuttings left on Allotments.
  - **Obtain three quotations for the clearing and cultivation work required on the allotments**  
Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Allotments quotation for cultivation and clearance work.
  - **Ask Ted Brown to clear the litter on Mill Lane:** completed and the work has been done.
  - **Ask East Herts Council to clear the litter on Station Road:** completed.
  - **Inspect footpath 17**  
Mr. Meischke said that Mr. Poulton had picked up some litter on footpath 17; however most of the litter problem is on the school land. Mr. Poulton has agreed to contact the school. **Action: N. Poulton**
  - **Ask Hertfordshire Highways to fill the empty or partially full salt bins:** completed.
  - **Mr. Poulton to rake the gravel around the War Memorial:** completed.
  - **Ask Brian Bunyan to varnish the ornate village sign**  
Both Mr. Meischke and the Clerk have spoken to Brian Bunyan, who agreed to do the work as soon as the temperature is warm enough to allow the varnish to dry.
  - **Make further enquiries re village history entry for the website**  
Refer to item 8 b iv, Routine Reports - Website.
  - **Inform East Herts Council that the Clerk will attend Customer Service Briefing:** completed.
  - **Speak to Malcolm Amey (East Herts Council) about Oak tree in sportsfield hedge**  
Refer to item 9 k, Correspondence received - East Herts Council – Oak tree in sportsfield hedge opposite 10 School Lane.
  - **Chase East Herts Council for a response re planning decision for 103 Great Innings South**  
Refer to item 9 k, Correspondence received - Letter from East Herts Council re Planning permission at 103 Great Innings South.
  - **Return one signed copy to Rumball Sedgwick letter re new Allotments lease:** completed.
  - **Chase Hertfordshire Highways for a response to our letter re street lighting costs:** completed.  
Mr. Meischke said that Mark Fells (Strategy Development Manger, Hertfordshire Highways) e-mailed on 12<sup>th</sup> April in response to the Parish Council's letter asking how the changes in street lighting will affect Watton-at-Stone and in particular, the energy and lighting costs.  
Mr. Meischke said it would be best for all Parish Councillors to read the e-mail themselves and discuss this item at the May Parish Council meeting. **Agenda: 05/10**  
The Clerk to forward Mark Fells e-mail to all Parish Councillors.
  - **Attend Launch of Hertfordshire Policing Plan 2010/13 on 29<sup>th</sup> March**  
Mr. Filer was unable to attend the launch of the Hertfordshire Policing Plan because he was unwell. .
  - **Attend East Herts Council Rural Parish Conference on 10<sup>th</sup> June**  
This item to remain on the agenda under review of actions. **Action: C. Dinnin**
  - **Write Parish News entries:** completed.
- c) **Action points outstanding for more than two months**
- **Inspect Whempstead notice board to decide how best to repair it:** outstanding.  
**Action: J. Meischke/ C. Clark**

## 6 Planning

Mr. Stock reported on the following items.

### a) Applications

#### i) Watton Methodist Church, High Street (3/10/0444/FP)

New side entrance with ramp, single storey side and rear extension and vestry extension and surfacing of existing grass parking area to rear of church

Mr. Stock said that this application was similar to that previously refused by the planning department on quality grounds. He explained the revised plans and said that he could see no reason for us to object.

After reviewing the plans, all Parish Councillors present agreed that the Clerk writes to East Herts Council to inform them that we have no comment on this application. **Action: J. Allsop**

**ii) Watton Place Clinic, 60, High Street (3/10/0525/LB)**

Installation of air conditioning condenser unit on external south east facing wall linked to fan unit in FF Surgery. 390x635x305 external wall unit fixed to rendered wall, adjacent to chimney and pipes fed through roof space to fan unit in FF surgery

Mr. Stock explained the reason for this application together with the details of the locations of the equipment involved. He also said that the application-package included a letter from Mr. R. Abel Smith who stated that he had no objection to the installation of an air conditioning condenser on the outside of the building subject to planning consent being granted by East Herts Council. Mr. Stock could not see any reason for us to object.

After reviewing the plans, all Parish Councillors present (with the exception of Mrs. McCash, who took no part in the discussion) agreed that that the Clerk writes to East Herts Council to inform them that we have no comment on this application. **Action: J. Allsop**

**b) Decisions**

None

**c) Appeal Decision**

**i) Land East of Walkern Road and North and West of High Elms Lane, Benington**

3 no. wind turbines of up to 119m in height, a permanent meteorological mast, substation, access tracks and ancillary infrastructure - Planning Inspectorate - Appeal dismissed

Mr. Stock said that he was sure he was expressing the view of all Parish Councillors when saying that he was very pleased with the appeal decision. All Parish Councillors present agreed with this and said that the report was very well written.

**7 Specific items**

**a) Claim for vandalised bench seat**

The Beadle family have now installed the replacement bench seat near Watkins Hall Farm. They have also installed a post at both ends of the bench for extra protection.

Mr. Meischke to write a letter of thanks to Alan Beadle.

**Action: J. Meischke**

**b) Ferreting**

Mr. Meischke said he had spoken with Bob Adams, who would like Peter Phillips to be solely responsible for ferreting Watton Green and agreed to share the ferreting of the Lammas.

Mr. Meischke proposed that the following licences be issued .

- **Bob Adams (of 4 Glebe Close)** to ferret the Lammas, the paddock at the far end of the Lammas, and the Allotments.
- **Peter Phillips (of 18 Lammas Road)** to ferret Watton Green and the Lammas.

Mr. Phillips to be informed that no more than two persons to ferret on licensed land at any one time.

Mr. Adams and Mr. Phillips, who know each other, to liaise over the ferreting of the Lammas.

Mr. Knight seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Ferreting licences to be issued accordingly.

**Action: J. Meischke**

Peter Phillips will also be required to give an annual performance report.

**c) The planning system and how it works?**

Mr. Smith attended the CPRE run seminar on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2010 and gave his report as follows.

‘This was an all day seminar covering the planning system from its inception in 1947 to the current time when local authorities are developing their Local Development Frameworks (LDF).

Two pieces of legislation have been introduced more recently to streamline the planning system.

One is the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), of which ours is the Eastern Region, which aims to better plan and co-ordinate overarching policy within government requirements.

The other is the Major Infrastructure Project legislation, which aims to enable projects of national importance to be fast tracked through the system reducing the lead in time to years rather than decades.

Local authorities are charged with developing their LDFs, where they fail to do so RSS policies may override local plans.

EHDC plans to have its Core strategy in place and adopted by 2013. As it has only recently adopted its revised Local Plan it has been allowed to save many of its policies for inclusion in its LDF . Other policies have been dropped where they have been superseded (refer to recent circulation papers). The current LDF should be in place until 2031.

We will see PPGs (Planning Policy Guidance) gradually being replaced by PPSs (Planning Policy Statements), a subtle but significant change of emphasis.

It is also unlikely that Parish Plans will be included as a document in the LDF.

My conclusion is that, in proportion to our influence, we should continue to comment on applications and proposals based on our common sense views. Only when we wish to be more robust should we start to back up our views with reference to policies in which case we may need professional advice, unless any councillor wishes to take on a full time role in that area.'

## 8 Reports

### a) Sub-Committees

#### Budget & Finance

Mr. Filer reported on the following items.

- **Monthly accounts**

All Parish Councillors present were given a copy of the monthly accounts.

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

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

Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of the draft Parish Council and Community Hall statement of accounts for the year ending the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010.

Mr. Filer explained that the accounts were draft only because the end of year bank statements have not yet been received. He went through the expenditure and income items for both the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts and explained the variations in the statements.

The Community Hall account has surplus reserves approaching £20,000. Mr. Filer said we should be aware that this is a very high reserve. However, the Community Hall Trustees do have some large long-term capital expenditure items. For example: the resurfacing of the MPPA and new sports flooring for the Main Hall and blinds for the Pavilion.

Parish Councillors agreed that the long-term capital expenditure items needed reviewing because they had not been updated since November 2007.

Mr. Filer said that the Parish Council needs to be very careful about the amount of money they leave in reserve and they could consider giving a grant to the new tennis court fund of £1000.

It was agreed to put the 'Estimated long-term capital expenditure items' on the June 2010 Parish Council agenda.

**Agenda: June 2010**

The Clerk to e-mail all Parish Councillors a copy of the November 2007 long-term capital expenditure items.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Summary of 12-monthly statement of accounts for the year ended 2009/10**

The Clerk cannot produce the summary 12-monthly statement of accounts until the end-of-year bank statements have arrived.

All Parish Councillors to be e-mailed a copy of the summary 12-monthly statement of accounts for the Parish Council and Community Hall for the year ending the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 prior to the Annual Parish meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> May.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Asset register**

The Clerk to e-mail Mr. Meischke and Mr. Poulton the current version of the Asset register for updating.

**Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Meischke and Mr. Poulton to update the Asset register for approval at the June 2010 Parish Council meeting.

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

**Agenda: June 2010**

- **Annual Return of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010**

BDO Stoy Hayward LLP wrote on 30<sup>th</sup> March informing us of the details for the annual audit for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010. The public inspection period starts on 10<sup>th</sup> May and ends on 7<sup>th</sup> June (notices advertising the inspection period need to be displayed from 26<sup>th</sup> April to 9<sup>th</sup> May inclusive), the completed Annual Return and all relevant documentation needs to be sent to BDO Stoy Hayward LLP by 11<sup>th</sup> June 2010.

- **Parish Council insurance**

The Parish Council insurance is up for renewal on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2010. Mr. Filer said that our current insurers are Came and Company.

Norris and Fisher and Allied Westminster, who provided insurance quotations for the Community Hall, are unable to provide a quotation for the Parish Council insurance. However, both companies hoped they would be in a position to do so next year.

It was agreed to obtain quotations from Came and Company, Allianz and Suffolk ACRE Insurance Services for discussion at the May Parish Council meeting.

**Action: J. Allsop**

The Clerk to e-mail the Clerk's from Benington, Datchworth and Tewin to obtain the names of alternative insurers.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Community Hall rates notice for 2010/11**

Mr. Filer said that the rate demand is down from £ 1091.25 to £1076.40. The Community Hall benefits from an 80% rate relief.

### Community Hall Trustees

In the absence of Mr. Poulton, Mr. Stock reported on the following items.

- **Minutes of meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2010**

Mr. Stock proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by Mr. Meischke. Mr. Knight seconded the motion and Mr. Meischke was in favour.

- **Replacement of Exterior Door at the car park side of the building**

Brian Bunyan hopes to fit the new external door in the next month.

Mr. Meischke showed Parish Councillors a lock Michael Lewis (A. P. Access) had suggested as an alternative style of entrance lock for the exterior door, in place of the current crash-bar with locking system. This alternative lock would be fitted in a similar manner as a standard door lock, but has a crash button on the inside of the door to allow emergency exit. This type of lock is much more secure and more reliable than the type currently fitted on the exterior door. The approximate cost of the new lock is £250 - £300.

Mr. Meischke proposed that the new style of lock be fitted. Mr. Filer seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Mr. Lewis and Mr. Bunyan would liaise over the fitting of the lock.

Mr. Meischke to notify them accordingly.

**Action: J. Meischke**

- After reviewing the minutes, Mr. Stock proposed that the following recommendations be accepted by the Parish Council. Mr. Smith seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

- **Regular hirer and keys**

**Recommendation:** The Parish Council agrees to the Tennis Club's request for keys to gain access to the changing rooms and the internal toilets, and that a key-holder agreement is issued accordingly. The Tennis Club will be sent an invoice to pay for the keys required.

**Recommendation:** The Parish Council agrees to Dave Boddy's request for keys to the Community Hall and a key-holder agreement is issued accordingly. Dave Boddy will be sent an invoice to pay for the keys required.

**Recommendation:** The Parish Council agrees that Mr. Dunhill signs a key-holder agreement so that he can use Mr. Stock's keys (in his absence) to gain access to the Sports Hall on Badminton Club nights only. These keys will be taken from the set held by Mr. Stock as a Trustee of the Community Hall.

Mr. Filer expressed his concern that so many sets of keys are out of the control of the Parish Council. Mr. Stock agreed and said that he had expressed such concerns many times in the past. However, he did accept that this could not be avoided without us having a caretaker.

Mr. Meischke agreed and said that there is no other reasonable alternative for providing access to the Community Hall by regular hirers.

- **British Gas – electricity**

**Recommendation:** Based on the problems experienced on switching the Community Hall gas usage from British Gas to Npower, the Community Hall Trustees recommend that the Parish Council authorise that the electricity supply remains with British Gas. Especially in view of the fact that the unit charge offered in the new contract is lower than the current price paid.

- **Casual hire and regular hirers agreement**

**Recommendation:** The following addition to be made to the casual hirers agreement as a new item 1.

‘Whenever there are children present at an event in the Community Hall or sportsfield, the hirer shall appoint a person responsible for their protection.’

- **Sports and Social Club hire agreement**

The following additions to be made to the ‘Annual Agreement for the use of specified Sports Facilities within the Village’, directly after the first two bullet points.



**Recommendation:** The following two items are applicable to both parts 1 and 2 of the agreement.

1. The Sports and Social Club is responsible for any insurance required to cover the loss or theft of its equipment or property kept within or around the Community Hall building.
2. Whenever there are children present at an event in the Community Hall or sportsfield, the hirer shall appoint a person responsible for their protection.

Item 10 under Pavilion to be deleted, namely: ‘The Sports and Social Club is responsible for any insurance required to cover the loss or theft of its equipment or property kept within or around the Community Hall building.’

- **Anti-social behaviour of footballers**

This subject was raised as a result of a complaint from a member of the public.

The current problem of anti-social behaviour of football players and their supporters was discussed in details. Sympathy for others using the facilities was appreciated, however it was agreed that resolving the problem was going to be difficult.

Mr. Knight said that the Football Association take a dim view of players swearing at the referee and other officials, but don’t take much notice when players swear at each other.

It was agreed to discuss this item again at the September Parish Council meeting with a view to possibly:

- contacting the Football Association in September advising them of the problem
- contacting our PCSO asking her to get involved
- putting up posters (in the changing room and corridor areas) at the start of the football season, asking players to refrain from anti-social behaviour that could cause offense to members of the public, e.g. mothers and children using the adjacent play area.

**Agenda: 09/10**

**Recommendation:** The Parish Council writes to the Sports and Social Club asking them to address the anti-social language problem.

Mrs. McCash said she had been very upset by the language used by the players during the football match on Remembrance Sunday because it could be heard during and immediately after the service. She therefore suggested that future games should be banned or delayed on Remembrance Day.

Agreement was not reached by Parish Councillors present. Mr. Knight said that he would refer this subject to the Sports and Social Club at the start of the next football season. **Action: I. Knight**

- **Replace six strip lights in the Sports Hall**

Mr. Lewis is not interested in replacing the strip lights in the Sports Hall because he has no official safety-training to use a high-level tower on wheels and therefore would not be insured.

Mr. Meischke said that Mr. Poulton had obtained a verbal quotation from RKA Services, who installed the window winder mechanism in the Main Hall and are prepared to change the strip lights, for £300 provided we supply the light tubes.

Mr. Stock proposed that we accept RKA Services quotation and replace all of the lighting tubes in the Main Hall because they could all be reaching the end of their lives. Mr. Filer seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

**Action: N. Poulton**

- **Request to erect a ball stopper from the Cricket Club**

Mr. Stock said that a recent meeting of the Sports and Social Club it appeared to be unclear as to whether or not the Cricket Club would be erecting a ball-stopper barrier.

- **Monitor Cricket Club use of small changing rooms to store their equipment**

At the September 2009 meeting, it was reported that Dave Boddy had complained that one of the small changing rooms was full of Cricket gear. It was agreed at that meeting not to raise this issue with the Cricket Club until the start of the 2010 season and that only referee’s coats were allowed to be left in the small changing rooms.

Mr. Knight said the Cricket Club had cleared all their gear from the small changing room and Parish Councillors agreed that the Trustees should monitor the situation this season.

- **6-monthly check of the MPPA, Play Area on sportsfield, Community Hall equipment and seats in the village**

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke completed the 6-monthly check on 9<sup>th</sup> April.

Mr. Meischke reported on the adverse items highlighted in the 6-monthly check.

- **Community Hall blinds:** these will need replacing soon.
- **First aid box:** valid until 2013.
- **Loft ladder, car park side:** repairs carried-out to loft ladder used by Dave Boddy.

- **Kicker board:** nearest to sportsfield and past the gate needs securing. **Action: I. Knight/N. Poulton**  
Money needs to go into the 2011/12 budget for painting the kicker boards. **Budget: 2011/12**  
Mr. Knight to write a specification for the painting and any repair work required to the kicker-boards.

**Action: I. Knight**

Mrs. McCash asked Mr. Knight to e-mail her the specification so that she could pass it on to someone she knows who may be interested in quoting to do the work. **Action: I. Knight/H. McCash**

- **Bench seats**

- The bench seat at the North end of the High Street near the bus stop has a bottom slat missing and is not repairable.
- The bench seat near Mill Lane has three slats missing off the back and needs attention.

Mr. Meischke and Mr. Poulton to agree what action should be taken. **Action: J. Meischke**

## Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **New Tennis Court**

The final preparation of the COMMA grant application form will commence this week.

**Action: I. Knight/N. Poulton**

Mr. Knight was pleased to report that after three months of chasing, Rumball Sedgwick wrote on 12<sup>th</sup> April as follows.

**‘Glebe land - Watton-at-Stone**

I confirm that the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council has a lease of the Recreation Ground as shown edged blue on the attached plan and that the St. Albans Diocesan Board of Finance Glebe Committee has agreed, subject to contract, to grant a lease of the land edged in red to the Parish Council, in order that the Parish Council can extend sports facilities on to this land.

I trust that this letter provides you with the information you require to assist in your grant application and fundraising.’

An application has been made to County Councillor Bryan Hammond for a £1,000 grant from his Locality Budget.

£8,000 of Tennis club funds have been paid into the Watton-at-Stone Community Hall Tennis Court Fund account. The Clerk to obtain a bank statement from Alliance and Leicester, which will be included with the COMMA grant application. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Sportsfield**

Mr. Knight and Mr. Smith have had further discussions with Frank Cooper and Son who have been commissioned to do the sportsfield maintenance work. The cost of the work will be approximately £300 less than was originally budgeted at around £774. The work is scheduled to begin during the week commencing 19<sup>th</sup> April.

## Environment Sub-Committee

In the absence of Mrs. Dinnin, Mr. Smith reported on the following items.

- **Allotments**

- **Update on Kimberley hedge cuttings left on Allotments**

The Clerk has spoken to Peter Evernden who agreed to arrange for his hedge cuttings to be removed from the allotments.

- **Allotments quotation for cultivation and clearance work**

Three quotations have been obtained for the cultivation and clearance work on the allotment.

- Adam Welch £580
- Bluebury – contractors £450 plus VAT
- Tony Beach £400

Due to other work commitments, Blue Bury Contractors can no longer do the work.

After discussion, it was agreed that Mrs. Dinnin should ask Tony Beach if he has up-to-date public liability insurance, and if he does accept his quotation. If Mr. Beach does not have public liability insurance, Adam Welch’s quotation to be accepted. **Action: C. Dinnin**

- **Section of fence down on Chestnuts boundary**

This section of fencing has now been repaired.

- **Overhanging branches along his section of the river bank footpath**

The Parish Council wrote to Mr. Abel Smith about the branches overhanging the river on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2009 and received a reply (dated 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2009) stating: “I note what you say about branches

allegedly overhanging the footpath that runs between the Lammas and the Walkern Road. I will have a look at it and assess it for myself.”

It was agreed that the Environment Agency should contact Mr. Abel Smith if the trees need cutting back and this is not a Parish Council issue. No further action to be taken.

- **Logs on Watton Green and Lammas**

Malcolm Oakman has expressed an interest in any logs that come available for his log burner.

Mrs. Dinnin has sent him down to the Lammas to inspect the logs.

The logs at Watton Green are very charred and not suitable for burning. Mrs. Dinnin has suggested that Ted Brown could cut up the logs and put them on the side of the green. Mr. Smith said that Blue Bury Contractors will move the logs when he is next doing work at Watton Green. **Action: M. Smith**

- **Rubbish bin on the Lammas**

The rubbish bin on the footpath from Walkern Road, which runs along the top of the Lammas bank, is down. Parish Councillors asked if we need a bin on the Lammas and who empties it. Mrs. McCash said that she empties the bin approximately once a fortnight or as and when needed. During the winter months, not much rubbish is collected; however, it is much used during the summer months.

Mr. Smith agreed to reinstate the bin.

**Action: M. Smith**

**b) Routine reports**

- i) **Fire-alarm test**

The fire-alarm was tested by Mr. Poulton this afternoon.

- ii) **Monthly village-report**

Mrs. McCash completed the report on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2010.

Only the adverse items highlighted in the monthly village-report are minuted.

- **Molehills on the sportsfield:** It was agreed to ask Fred Burnell to deal with the mole problem on the sportsfield. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Weeds pushing through Children’s play area safety surface by the two spring sit-ons:** Mr. Meischke to ask Ted Brown to weed kill this area. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Swings seats:** It was agreed to monitor the large splits in the swing seats.
- **Swings - paintwork:** Mr. Meischke to inspect the paintwork, which Mrs. McCash highlighted as in poor condition. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **See saw:** The see-saw squeaks, no action to be taken at this time.
- **Allotments:** Good apart from the debris left on site when the Kimberley hedges were cut.
- **Mill Lane looked unsightly:** This is not a Parish Council responsibility.
- **Salt bins:** Two bins need filling. Hertfordshire Highways have been asked to fill the salt bins before the coming winter.
- **Ornate sign:** Brian Bunyan is scheduled to do the work as soon as the weather allows.

- iii) **Weekly sportsfield-report and action**

None.

- iv) **Website**

Mr. Stock said that Vernon Dunhill has agreed to write the ‘history of Watton-at-Stone’ part of the website.

Mr. Dunhill already has a fair amount of input available from the Village Guide. Mr. Meischke and Mr. Poulton have also agreed to forward him other information they have on the history of Watton-at-Stone.

Mr. Stock suggested a recollections section for the website may be of interest at some time. In which case, Parishioners would be encouraged to submit their personal memories of events/changes that have happened in the village. Mr. Stock said he would be happy to put this section together and write an entry for the Parish News to gauge the interest. The elderly in the village could have good input to this section and thus ensure that valuable memories of the village are not lost.

- v) **Website diary**

Problem with offensive language used by footballers and their supporters to be put on the Google Calendar for September. This item to be discussed at the September Parish Council meeting. **Action: J. Allsop**  
**Agenda: 09/10**

Put reminder to contact Hertfordshire Highways if the salt bins have not been filled by September on the Google Calendar. **Action: J. Allsop**

## 9 Correspondence received

### a) Letter from Michael Freeman

Mr. Meischke read out a letter dated 15<sup>th</sup> March from Mike Freeman as follows.

I am in the middle of the bi-annual litterpick in the village and would be grateful if I could make the following suggestions/observations with a view to maintaining the tidy appearance of the village:

1. Could we trim the hedge which runs along the Station Road side of Hazeldell and the hedge on the corner of the road leading to the Oil Storage depot? If we could the overall appearance of the hedges would improve and it would be harder for litter to be thrown or blown into them
2. The bench in Station Road backing onto Hazeldell appear to become a favoured spot for drinkers, judging by the number of alcopops and cider cans recovered from there.
3. Last year there was a substantial trail of vodka bottles and beer cans leading from the Stevenage roundabout to the high Street. I have not cleared that end yet, so cannot say if the problem persists, but there is a similar trail of vodka bottles and beer cans now leading from the Railway Station past the Oil Storage depot (and into the unruly hedge) as well as along Clappers Lane (which I have also yet to clear).

Could points 2 and 3 be brought to the attention of PC Andy Woodward and his team? This is undoubtedly youths but I am not sure about the second.

4. The land behind the Railways Stain platforms is a disgrace and I doubt if Network Rail have plans to clear it any time soon. Can the Council please approach Network Rail for permission for me to enter that land to do the necessary (I believe I would otherwise be trespassing).
5. Long term, would the Parish Council be prepared to promote a litter awareness programme in the village, along the lines of '(a) don't drop litter and (b) if we all pick up one item a day we wouldn't have a problem?'

There are of course many deep-seated causes of this problem (e.g. allowing McDonalds to trade in this country in the first place, as half of the rubbish I recover come from their shops) and we cannot hope to address them all but I believe the above would help, and I would welcome the Council's views.

With kind regards,

Mr. Meischke read out an e-mail from Mr. Poulton.

'I thought it might be helpful if I commented on Mike's letter

Item 1: the trimming of the hedge along Station Road is down to East Herts Council. I doubt if they would trim the hedge now, as it is the bird nesting season but we could ask.

Items 2 and 3: As Mike says, this is a police matter and we need to contact PC Andy Woodward.

Item 4: I note Mike's comments re the rubbish on the platform. I have been trying for ages to get this rubbish removed and I will forward to you shortly my e-mails re this rubbish.

I did volunteer Ted Brown for this work but our dear friend Health and Safety won't allow anyone onto or near their property unless they are employed by First Capital Connect.

Item 5: I think Mike's idea to promote a litter awareness programme is excellent.'

Mrs. McCash agreed to speak to PC Andy Woodward re items 2 and 3 of Mike Freeman's letter.

**Action: H. McCash**

Parish Councillors agreed that they were happy to promote litter awareness programme in anyway they could, which could include leaflets to go out with Parish News or posters on the Parish Council notice boards.

However, there might be difficulties in promoting a litterpick day because of Health and Safety issues. In the past both the Scout and Guides and students from Heath Mount school have done a litterpick in the village. However, because of the current Health and Safety law, children can no longer take part in activities such as a litterpick. The Parish Council could possibly run an adult only event or encourage voluntary litterpicking.

This item to be placed on the May Parish Council agenda.

**Agenda: 05/10**

Mr. Meischke to write to Mike Freeman accordingly.

**Action: J. Meischke**

### b) County Councillor Brian Hammond re funding from the Locality Budget

County Councillor Brian Hammond wrote on 30<sup>th</sup> March to advise us that funding from his Locality Budget will be available for 2010/11. As mentioned under item 8a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee – New Tennis Court, the Tennis Club are applying for a £1000 towards the building of the new Tennis Court.

### c) Temporary Events and open license applications

The Licensing department at East Herts Council is e-mailing all temporary events and open license applications to the Parish Council. It was agreed that the Clerk only forward these e-mails to Parish Councillors when they include events in our parish.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**d) Small Business Engagement Accord and Parish Council opt in?**

Mr. Meischke read out part of an e-mail, dated 15<sup>th</sup> March from Julia Warren (the Clerk to Wheathampstead Parish Council).

Our local traders' association has requested that the Parish Council sign up to something called the "Small Business Engagement Accord". This has been drawn up by the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) as part of their 'Keep it Local' campaign and is a voluntary code of practice for local authorities. The principal behind this is that it aims to encourage a more productive dialogue between local authorities and the small businesses operating within their area of influence. The traders' assoc believes that by signing up to this accord it will help the PC keep in touch with the local business community and that this will therefore help the local businesses. The Small Business Engagement Accord appears to fit well with the aims of the Village Plan - which identified 50% of respondents prioritising shops and businesses and was the number one priority.

Parish Councillors agreed not to opt in to the Small Business Engagement Accord.

**e) Subscription to DIS (Direct Information Service)**

The Parish Council used to receive DIS free of charge approximately 15 years ago as part of their NALC membership.

'DIS continues to provide a fortnightly one stop shop for all the latest news and information which is relevant to your sector. With a round up of government statements and publications, up to date legal information, ministerial statements, press releases and consultations from across the sector, along with regular events and vacancy listings, DIS is a great source of information.'

The annual subscription rate for non-NALC members is £135 plus VAT (£90 plus VAT for NALC members).

Parish Councillors agreed not to subscribe to DIS.

**f) East Herts Council – Changes to the frequency of dog bin emptying for 2010/11**

Ian Sharratt (Environmental Services Manager at East Herts Council) wrote on 19<sup>th</sup> March about the changes being made to the dog-bin emptying schedule from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010. The bin emptying is being reduced from 76 times a year to 65 times a year.

Previously the bins were emptied twice a week in summer and one a week over winter. The changes are being made to the spring and autumn collections which are reduced from twice to once a week.

The financial implications of the changes will be passed to the Parish Council in our 2010/11 invoice.

The Parish Council will monitor the fullness of dog bins in view of the changes.

**g) CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England – Annual Subscription**

The annual CPRE subscription for 2010/11 is £29 (the same as for 2009/10).

Mr. Smith proposed that we renew our CPRE membership. Mr. Knight seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**h) Letter from East Herts Council re Planning permission at 103 Great Innings South**

The Clerk to e-mail East Herts Council letter (dated 22<sup>nd</sup> March) to all Parish Councillors. **Action: J. Allsop**

**i) East Herts Council – Local Plan – ‘Saved Policies**

This item is currently on circulation.

**j) Letter from Bob Adams**

Mr. Meischke read out the following letter from Bob Adams, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

'I would like to apply once again, to the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council for a licence to ferret the following areas as I have done in previous seasons.

Watton Green

The Allotments

The Lammas and the paddock at the far end of the Lammas

These are the figures of rabbits and rats caught last season.

	Rabbits	Rats
Lammas	89	4
Lammas Paddock	32	0
Watton Green	11	0
Allotments	12	5'

**k) East Herts Council – Oak tree in sportsfield hedge opposite 10 School Lane**

Malcolm Amey, East Herts Council, has copied the Parish Council with a letter he sent to Dr. Norden (dated 7<sup>th</sup> April) agreeing to the removal of the Oak tree in the sportsfield hedge. A replacement broadleaf tree is to be planted in a suitable location elsewhere on the sportsfield (Mr. Amey enclosed with his letter a list of suitable trees).

Dr. Norden e-mailed Mr. Poulton, on 9<sup>th</sup> April, agreeing to pay for all reasonable costs for the removal of the tree, reinstatement of the sportsfield hedge and planting of a new tree.

After discussion about the siting of the new tree, it was agreed to contact Malcolm Amey asking for his advice about the best location and type of tree. **Action: N. Poulton**

Mr. Poulton to obtain quotations for the removal of the Oak tree. **Action: N. Poulton**

Additional planting required in the sportsfield hedge to be discussed when the Oak tree has been removed.

**l) Rumball Sedgwick re Glebe Lane**

Refer to item 8 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee – New Tennis Court.

**m) Letter from Barry Lee, 1 Hockerill**

Mr. Meischke read out a letter from Barry Lee (1, Hockerill) complaining about cars parking on the public footpath opposite his gated driveway, which prevents him from getting his own car out of his driveway. Sometimes the cars park all night in this position. During school collection times cars often park across his gates.

Mrs. McCash agreed to pass Mr. Lee’s letter to PC Andy Woodward and will liaise with Mr. Meischke about a written response to Mr. Lee. **Action: H. McCash**

**10 Village organisations**

- **Watton Youth Drop Inn:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone School Governors:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Watch**  
Mrs. McCash said that she is meeting with PC Andy Woodward tomorrow (14<sup>th</sup> April) to discuss concerns about policing in Watton-at-Stone. The new PCSO has been very disappointing and has done nothing for the village. She never does walkabouts and just drives through Watton-at-Stone.  
PC Andy Woodward and PCSO Sally Brooks failed to turn up for the Neighbourhood Watch - Street Briefing at the Watton-at-Stone Community Hall on 26<sup>th</sup> March, because they forgot. Mrs. McCash said that Watton-at-Stone was well looked after when Paul Weston was PCSO for the village.
- **Watton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone War Memorial Hall Management Committee:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Pre-School Playgroup:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Scout & Guide Group:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Sports & Social Club:** Nothing to report.
- **Police Authority:** Nothing to report.
- **River Beane Restoration Association:** Nothing to report.

**11 Items for Parish News**

No items were identified for inclusion in the May 2010 issue of the Parish News.

- **The meeting closed at 2128.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2010.**