

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 12th April 2011

Present:	Mr. John Meischke (Chairman)	Mr. Michael Smith (Vice-Chairman)
	Mrs. Christine Dinnin	Mr. Ian Knight
	Mr. Nigel Poulton	The Clerk (Mrs. Jane Allsop)
Police	PCSO Sally Brooks (from 1920 – 1935)	
Members of the press	None	
Members of the public:	Mr. Chris Fowler, Mrs. Mary Fowler and Mr. Harry Slater (until 1935)	

1 Apologies for absence and leave of absence

Apologies for absence: Mr. Denis Filer, Mr. Iain Harris, Mrs. Helen McCash and Mr. Charles Clark.

Leave of absence: Mr. David Stock.

2 Public Participation

- PCSO Sally Brooks arrived at the meeting.

Mr. Fowler (1 School Lane) first raised the problems he was having at night with cars parking in the Community Hall car park and playing loud 'boom booming' music at the December 2010 Parish Council meeting. He said that youths have been throwing plastic bottles at his windows and his wife is frightened of being left alone at night in their home. He has contacted the police on numerous occasions about the problems and they have attended on some occasions to find that the culprits have already left the area.

Mr. Fowler gave the Parish Council and PCSO Sally Brooks copies of car registration numbers he had taken from vehicles, which were at the Community Hall car park while youngsters were drinking alcohol and playing loud music.

PCSO Sally Brooks said that the vehicle nuisance problem in the School Lane area and speeding in the village is being addressed by the police.

Mr. Slater witnessed three hooded youths go into the outside Ladies toilet. It would appear that they were responsible, although this cannot be proven for defecating on the floor instead of using the toilet.

Mr. Poulton was left with the job of clearing up the mess. Fortunately, Mr. Fowler took pictures of the three hooded youths, who were identified from the photographs and received cautions from the Police.

Mr. Slater said that Allotment holders have been having bonfires when the wind is blowing towards Glebe Court. Mr. Poulton said that there are regulations on bonfires and all the Allotment holders should be aware that they are meant to act in a responsible manner.

Mrs. Dinnin said that she would raise the issue of bonfires at the Allotment and Garden Association AGM.

Action: C. Dinnin

3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

Mr. Meischke had four additional items for this meeting.

- **E-mail from Sally and Peter Aknai of Hazeldell**
This item to be discussed under 10 e, Correspondence received.
- **Planning application – 39 Hazeldell (03/11/0557/FP)**
This item to be discussed under 7 a v, Planning applications.
- **Planning decision - 1 The Beaneside (3/11/0192/FP)**
This item to be discussed under 7 b iii, Planning decisions.
- **Planning withdrawal – 1 High Street (3/11/0126/FP)**
This item to be discussed under 7 c i, Planning withdrawals.

4 Declaration of Interests

Mr. Poulton declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 7 a i and ii, Planning applications - Land adjacent to 99 High Street (Mr. Poulton has been helping local residents with their objections).

5 Report from PCSO Sally Brooks on Policing matters relating to the village

PC Andy Woodward sent his apologies for not being able to attend tonight's meeting.

PCSO Sally Brooks presented the crime statics for the following periods.

1st April 2009 – 31st March 2010: 74 crimes with 17 detections

1st April 2010 – 31st March 2011: 75 crimes with 18 detections

She then reported on the following items.

- A 20-year old male has been arrested and charged with cutting down trees on the Great Innings Estate.
- A man in Hockerill is being charged with setting his own house on fire.
- Three burglaries have taken place since February 11th, two in Great Innings and one in Hockerill.
- An opportunist burglary took place over the weekend of 9th to 10th April, when car keys were stolen from an open ground-floor window in Moorymead Close and the thieves made off with the car.
- The vehicle nuisance problem in the School Lane area and speeding in the village is being addressed by the police.

PCSO Sally Brooks said that it has been brought to her attention that there are no warning signs up at the Great Innings play area. Mr. Poulton agreed to take this up with Hertfordshire Highways.

Action: N. Poulton

Mr. Fowler said that he is now the school lollypop person on Station Road and is getting familiar with the people that are regularly speeding up and down Station Road. He said he would be happy to be involved in any speed control in this area.

PCSO Sally Brooks confirmed that the police would be visiting the village on a regular basis during the school summer holidays,

PCSO Sally Brooks, Mr. Chris Fowler, Mrs. Mary Fowler and Mr. Harry Slater left meeting at 1935.

6 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 8th March 2011**

Mr. Smith proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

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

b) Review of actions

- **Monitor situation re missing fence adjacent to Mill Lane bridge**

Mrs. Dinnin reported that the area where the fence is missing, adjacent to the Mill Lane bridge, had been made secure with temporary fencing. Permanent fencing is expected to be installed sometime in May.

- **Put an article in the Parish News re ideas for celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee**

Mrs. Dinnin said that two volunteers came forward to help with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebration but neither of them came forward with ideas for the celebrations.

- **Update on improving quality of the 'Peep in the Past' film**

Mrs. Dinnin's son advised her to contact Stanley Productions of Wardour Street, London re improving the quality of the 'Peep in the Past' film.

Action: C. Dinnin

- **Remove litterbin in the field by the Lammas**

Mr. Smith said he had not removed the bin yet because he could no longer gain vehicular access to the site.

After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed that because the bin is being well used it should not be removed, but the situation should be monitored on a monthly basis.

- **Write to planning department re 1 The Beaneside: completed.**

- **Draft a response to Mr. and Mrs. Taylor's letter for approval by Parish Councillors: completed.**

- **Inform Mr. Chris Fowler of the Parish Council's decision re car park barrier**

Mr. Poulton completed this action point.

- **Contact GlaxoSmithKline and Tesco re volunteer projects in the village**

Refer to item 9 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Identify volunteer projects in the village for Glaxo Smith Kline and Tesco volunteer teams.

- **E-mail Mr. Poulton the latest version of the Community Hall Asset Register: completed.**

- **Confirm any changes required to the Community Hall Asset Register: completed.**

Refer to item 9 a, Community Hall - Community Hall Asset register.

- **Contact our insurance company re ‘to grit or not to grit’ article: completed.**
Refer to item 9 a, Community Hall - Report and minutes of meeting held on 5th April 2011
- **Accept Jarrards Limited’s quotation to inspect the fire alarm system: completed.**
- **Speak to Rob Clayton re rubbish around Cricket Shed**
Mr. Knight has e-mailed Rob Clayton (Chairman of the Cricket Club) about the rubbish around the Cricket Shed advising him that if the clearance work has not been done by the Easter holidays, the Parish Council will arrange for the work to be done and charge the Cricket Club accordingly. **Action: I. Knight**
- **Inspect see-saw re missing bolt**
Mr. Meischke thanked Mr. Smith for fitting a new bolt on the see-saw.
- **E-mail Hertfordshire Highways requesting that the salt bins are filled: completed.**
Eralp Yucelt (Hertfordshire Highways) e-mailed on 22nd March as follows.
‘Thanks for your email. I have asked the works team supervisor to arrange for this work to be completed as soon as possible.’
- **Investigate black bags left near the War Memorial: completed.**
- **Send donation to River Beane Restoration Association: completed.**
- **Write Parish News insert**
This action point was withdrawn because the two allotments plots have been let.

c) Action points outstanding for more than two months

None.

7 Planning

a) Applications

i) 99 High street (3/11/0350)

New dwelling with part formed of conversion of existing stable with attached existing garage and parking
This item was discussed with the planning application item below.

ii) 99 High street (3/11/0351)

New dwelling with part formed of conversion of existing stable with existing garage – Listed Building

Mr. Poulton said he has been dealing with this application and that he and Mr. Smith met with neighbouring residents, who agreed that there were no real alteration to the recent set of plans that were withdrawn, except the modifications make the application slightly worse.

Mr. Poulton had a site meeting with Mr. Abel Smith, who owns the adjoining properties and he is unhappy with the plans.

Mr. Poulton said that the planning officers at East Herts Council are intending to check the plan measurements on site as they believe there may be a discrepancy.

Oliver Heald MP is also involved with supporting the current objections to this application.

After reviewing the plans, it was agreed to repeat our original objections of January 2011, as follows.

‘The Parish Council would like a decision on the above applications to be made by a full Planning Committee meeting and not delegated to an officer for a decision. They have asked their District Councillor, Nigel Poulton, to help insure that this happens.

The Parish Council strongly objects to the above applications for the following reasons.

- The proposal, on this restricted site, would result in a cramped form of development out of scale and character with the surrounding area with little amenity land. It would consequently be obtrusive and detrimental to the street scene and overbearing for occupiers of adjacent properties.
- The proposed development is in the Conservation area and is not in keeping with the surrounding houses in White House Close.
- The height of the proposed development exceeds those in the adjacent area and would be out of keeping.
- The entrance to this proposed development has a restricted access and any increase in traffic movement onto the High Street would be dangerous.
- The proposed development would cause a lack of privacy and light to the adjacent properties in White House Close, 93 High Street and The White House (99 High Street).
- The development is only 6.5 meters from one of the adjacent properties

- There is insufficient parking for a 4+ bedroom house and the proposed dwelling has sufficient rooms to be used as a six bedroom dwelling.
- The surface drainage would drain into the next door garden at 93 High Street.
- The plans are deceptive because they indicate that the garage and the barn are of an equal size, when in fact the garage is three times longer than the barn.

If planning permission is granted against our recommendation, the Parish Council would want your assurance that the residents of White House Close will be able to gain access to their properties at all times whilst construction work is being undertaken.’

Action: J. Allsop

iii) 6 Hazeldell (03/11/0426/FP)

Single storey front extension

Mr. Poulton reported that Mrs. McCash had visited the residents at numbers 4 and 8 Hazeldell, who had no objections to the plans. She also discussed the plans with Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke.

After reviewing the plans, Parish Councillors present agreed that the Clerk writes to East Herts Council informing them that we have no comment on this application.

Action: J. Allsop

iv) 22 Rivershill (03/11/0508/FP)

Single storey and two-storey side and rear extensions, replacing existing garage and conservatory

Mr. Meischke said that the Parish Council have been copied in with letters of objection to the application from Vernon Dunhill and Richard Shepherd (20 and 24 Rivershill).

Mr. Shepherd (24 Rivershill) had submitted a similar application, which the Parish Council supported, and was turned down by the planning department. Planning permission was later granted for a modified scheme that did not extend out as far at the front of the site and was reduced in height and therefore requiring a second staircase to be installed to access the room over the garage. Mr. Dunhill (20 Rivershill) was allowed to build a double height extension which allowed access to the room over the garage without the necessity for having a second staircase. The extension comes forward to a similar level as that at number 24.

After reviewing the plans, Parish Councillors agreed to object to the application for the following reasons.

- Over-development of the site.
- Not in keeping with the extensions on the adjacent properties.

Action: J. Allsop

v) 39 Hazeldell (03/11/0557/FP)

Single storey porch/front extension

Mr. Poulton reported that Mrs. McCash had visited the residents at 37 Hazeldell who had no objections to the plans. She was unable to contact the residents of 41 Hazeldell; however, they would not be affected by this application.

After reviewing the plans, it was agreed that the Clerk writes to East Herts Council informing them that we have no comment on this application.

Action: J. Allsop

b) Decisions

82, High Street 3/10/1846/LB

Replace timber bracket of swinging sign and repair first floor bay window

- East Herts Council - permission granted

ii) 60 Hazeldell (3/11/0071/FP)

Proposed two-storey side extension

- East Herts Council - permission granted

iii) 1 The Beanside (3/11/0192/FP)

Two-storey rear extension and first-floor side extension

- East Herts Council - permission granted

The Clerk to e-mail a copy of the planning decision to all Parish Councillors

Action: J. Allsop

c) Withdrawn

i)) 1 High Street (3/11/0126/FP)

2 no. detached dwellings with associated car parking and vehicular access.

8 Specific items

a) Request for Volunteer working teams

Refer to item 9 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Lammas bank steps/ Countryside Management Service/Volunteer teams.

b) Quality of the 'Peep in the Past' film

This item was discussed under 6 b, Reviews of actions - Update on improving quality of the 'Peep in the Past' film.

c) Factory unit in Mill Lane

Mr. Poulton said that he wanted to make Parish Councillors aware that it had been brought to his attention by a resident of Watton-at-Stone that a notice had been placed in the Post office advertising temporary accommodation at the factory unit in Mill Lane.

It would appear that the owner of the factory intends to convert the unit into seven bedsits with communal lounge, bathroom and kitchen facilities.

Mr. Poulton has spoken to the planning officers, who confirmed that a change of use would need to be sought and the matter is now being dealt with by the enforcement team. However, apart from a skip in the car park, no work appears to be taking place on site and the building is still boarded up.

d) Vandalism of trees and posts in the village

The vandalism to trees on the Great Innings estate was discussed under item 5, Report from PCSO Sally Brooks on Policing matters relating to the village.

As reported on in the April Trustees minutes, two bollards had been sawn off at the entrance leading onto the Abel Smith field in Mill Lane. The Abel Smith Estate took immediate action to secure that field, and others that they own around the village, from unwanted vehicular access. This was done by using the trunks of very large trees to prevent vehicular access, whilst still allowing pedestrian access.

e) Housing Needs Survey- Analysis

Mr. Poulton said that there was a disappointing 10% response to the housing survey. This compares to a 25% response to the 2001 housing survey.

The results of the latest survey show that 54 responses were against further housing development in Watton-at-Stone, whereas 62 responses were in support.

It was agreed that the results of the housing survey should be put on the Watton-at-Stone website and a notice to this affect, placed in the May issue of the Parish News. **Action: J. Allsop**

A copy of the results are attached to these minutes.

See attached

f) Local District and Parish Council elections

• Parish Council

Mr. Meischke said that East Herts Council had notified us that only nine applications were received for election to the Parish Council and an uncontested election has been declared. The Parish Council will now be required to co-opt a new member to fill the vacant position within 35 days of 5th May 2011.

It was agreed to place the Co-option of a Parish Councillor on the May agenda.

Agenda: 05/11

The following notice to be placed on the Parish Council notices boards.

'A vacancy exists for one member on the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council.

Any person living in the parish of Watton-at-Stone or Whempstead wishing to fill this vacancy should write to the Clerk (Jane Allsop, 9 Beane Road, Watton-at-Stone, Herts, SG14 3RG) to introduce themselves and give a brief outline of their reasons for wanting to be a Parish Councillor. All applications must be received on or before Monday 6th May 2011.

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact John Meischke (Chairman of the Parish Council) on 07970 083256.'

Action: J. Allsop

• District Council elections

Mr. Poulton reported that he and a Labour candidate had put their names forward for election as the District Councillor for the Watton-at-Stone ward. Elections will take place on Thursday 5th May 2011 in the Community Hall.

9 Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

In the absence of Mr. Filer, Mr. Meischke reported on the following items.

- **Monthly accounts**

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty cash – Payments	
John Holloway – Allotment rent	10.00	Fast Host – Domain name: Watton-pc.org.uk	7.08
Steve & Lyn Dann – Allotment rent	10.00	24 x stamps @ 41p	<u>9.84</u>
Margaret Swannell – Allotment rent	10.00		<u>16.92</u>
4 village guides	<u>4.00</u>		
	<u>34.00</u>		
Cheques issued			
Adam Welch	final leaf clearance work		150.00
RBRA	Donation towards running costs		25.00
BSWW Parish News	Housing survey		40.00
St. Albans Diocesan Board	1/2 year MPPA ground rent		90.00
Post Office	Tax and NI		439.32
Ted Brown	28 hrs litterpicking @ £7.75		217.00
Wages, Salaries, Allowances	April 2011 salary		1018.65
J. Allsop for Virgin Media	Phone charges to 03.04.11		20.99
			<u>2000.96</u>
Cheques received			
East Herts Council	Leaf pick grant		400.00
Santander	Interest		<u>0.14</u>
			<u>400.14</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash – Payments	
Floodlighting – 31.03.11	229.00	Vat return 02/11	14.81
Emma Waltham – Pavilion	49.00	Lock Stock and Barrel – combination padlock	38.86
Barbara Smart – Pavilion	64.00	Wages – March 2011	<u>7.65</u>
Circle Anglia – Pavilion	8.00		<u>61.32</u>
Jim Keen – Main Hall and Pavilion	160.00		
Clare Keenan – Main Hall and Pavilion	52.00		
Sharon Ling – Main Hall	35.00		
Sharon Ling – Pavilion	<u>72.00</u>		
	<u>669.00</u>		
Cheques issued			
British Gas	Electricity supply		219.63
Wages	March 2011		315.00
Npower	Gas supply		469.50
Jarrards	Fire equipment safety check		186.98
Wages	Cleaning		292.50
Norris & Fisher Insurance Brokers	Annual insurance		1209.99
			<u>2693.60</u>
Cheques received			
Watton School	Main Hall and Pavilion hire		1,212.97
Mr. and Mrs. Cox			48.00
Badminton Club	Main Hall hire		135.00
Conservation Society	Pavilion hire		32.00
Watton Youth Drop Inn	Main Hall and Pavilion hire		306.00
			<u>1,733.97</u>

Mr. Smith proposed that the Parish Council approves the payments. Mr. Poulton seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

- **Parish Council and Community Hall 12-monthly statement of accounts for the year ended 2010/11**

Mr. Meischke read out Mr. Filer's financial report for the year 2010/11 as follows.

'First of all my thanks to Jane for producing the information so promptly and for her full explanations in the comments column.

- **Parish Council**

We spent £782.50 on the allotments against a budget of £100 but the majority of this overspend was in the removal of a tree and the creation of three more allotments. There was also an overspend of 11% against budget on rubbish collection.

However most other expenditure items and also income were close to budget with Total Expenditure at £34,982 and Total Income at £35,635 against the budgeted figure of £35,580. I think that this is a very satisfactory outcome.

- **Community Hall**

The Total Expenditure was £23,386 against a budget of £17,745 which is an overspend of 34%. Electricity charges were £1,801 against a budget of £1,700 and gas charges were £3,827 against a budget of £2,500(53%over budget!). These gas charges will be a concern for 2011/12 but we do have a new contract with British Gas and some of the overspend can be explained by extra hiring, and therefore extra income in the year2010/11.

Other increased expenditure was in safety checks (£1,027 compared with a budget figure of £600); play equipment (£2,097 compared with a budget figure of £100); and decorating (£725 compared with a budget figure of £100). All these items were discussed and agreed at PC meetings and details are given in the comments column.

As you know, on the credit side we got a good deal on the CH insurance which came in at below 50% of budget (£1,470 compared with a budget figure of £3,000).

On the Income side we did well with our hiring which was well above budget (particularly for the pavilion) and a little to my surprise the income from floodlighting was 22% above budget.

The net result is that we overspent our income by £1,154.56 but if Brian Hammond's grant towards the external door cost had been included in the 2010/11 rather than the 2009/10 financial year we would have been close to balancing our expenditure against our income.

Overall I believe this was a satisfactory performance.

When the bank statements arrive we will probably have to make some minor adjustments to the accounts to allow for small interest receipts and you will need to get the PC to agree to this adjustment.'

Mr. Poulton reminded Parish Councillors that it was agreed to have the Pavilion decoration work done in the year 2010/11 instead of in 2011/12. This would have shown a further saving of £750, plus £700 for the manufacture and fitting a new external hardwood door at the Community Hall by Brian Bunyan (a grant of £684 for this work was received from Brian Hammond in the previous year 2009/10) would have shown a greater income than expenditure.

A comment to this affect to be included in the Community Hall 12-monthly statement of accounts.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Summary of 12-monthly statement of accounts for the year ended 2010/11**

All Parish Councillors were given a copy of the summary 12-monthly statement of accounts. The Parish Council 12-monthly statement is complete. However, the Community Hall 12-monthly statement accounts summary requires the addition of the COIF interest for the period ending 31st March 2011. The Clerk to include this figure when the COIF bank statements arrive and e-mail the revised accounts to all Parish Councillors before the Annual Parish meeting on 10th May.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Audit of Parish Council accounts**

Mr. Knight proposed that the Parish Council re-appoint Mr. Jim Morrissey to carry-out the internal audit of the Parish Council accounts. Mr. Smith seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk will take the Parish Council accounts to Jim Morrissey for auditing on Monday 18th April.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Audit of Community Hall accounts**

Mr. Knight proposed that the Parish Council re-appoint McCash and Hay to carry-out the audit of the Community Hall accounts. Mrs. Dinnin seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk will arrange for the Community Hall accounts to be submitted to McCash and Hay for auditing.

Action: J. Allsop

- **BDO re Annual Return of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31st March 2011**

BDO Stoy Hayward LLP wrote on 31st March informing us of the details for the annual audit for the year ending 31st March 2011. The public inspection period starts on 16th May and ends on 13th June (notices advertising the inspection period need to be displayed from 2nd May to 15th May inclusive), the completed Annual Return and all relevant documentation needs to be sent to BDO Stoy Hayward LLP by 17th June 2011.

- **Community Hall insurance renewal**
In April 2010, the Parish Council accepted a quotation for insurance cover on the Community Hall from Norris Fisher Insurance Brokers Limited for a three-year undertaking with Ansvar Insurance. The cost of insurance cover for 2010/11 was £1,469.88. This has been reduced to £1,209.99 for 2011/12.
- **Community Hall rates notice for 2011/12**
Mr. Meischke said that the rate demand is up from £1,076.40 to £1,125.80. The Community Hall benefits from an 80% rate relief.
- **CPRE (Campaign for the Protection of Rural England) - Membership renewal**
The annual CPRE subscription for 2011/12 is £29 (the same as for 2009/10 and 2010/11).
Mr. Smith proposed that we renew our CPRE membership. Mr. Knight seconded the motion and all present were in favour. **Action: J. Allsop**

Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Poulton reported on the following items.

- **Report and minutes of meeting held on 5th April 2011**
Page 1, item 3, second paragraph.
Rod Clayton' should read 'Rob Clayton'.
Page 4 item 20, final line
'from unwanted vehicular.' should read 'from unwanted vehicular access.'
Mr. Knight proposed that the minutes, as amended, be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record. Mr. Meischke seconded the motion and Mr. Poulton was in favour.
- **Recommendations:**
Mr. Smith proposed that the following Trustees recommendations be accepted. Mrs. Dinnin seconded the motion and all present were in favour.
 - **Cricket shed** - The removal of the graffiti on the Cricket Shed is the responsibility of the Parish Council, who will arrange for its removal.
 - **Gritting around the Community Hall** - The areas around the Community Hall are not gritted and laminated notices stating this fact to be put up in the Community Hall windows and notice boards in Autumn 2011.
This item to be placed on the October 2011 agenda. **Agenda: 10/11**
A paragraph about gritting to be included in the Community Hall hire agreement. **Action: J. Allsop**
Mr. Knight has produced the following notice.
'WARNING !
In frosty weather
Take Care
The areas around the Community Hall and Car Park
have not been gritted and will be slippery'
 - **Additional cleaning in the changing rooms and adjoining corridor** - Rebecca Evans to be instructed to do the extra cleaning work in the changing room and corridor areas. **Action: N. Poulton**
 - **Aluminium urinal in outside toilets** - A provision for replacing the urinal with a ceramic bowl be included in the 2012/13 budget. **Budget: 2012/13**
 - **Reframing of Tapestry in the Pavilion** - A provision for re-framing of the Tapestry to be included in the 2012/13 budget. **Budget: 2012/13**
 - **Picnic bench** - The purchase of a picnic bench be deferred until such time that the Parish Council are approached again.
 - **Electrical inspection** – The Community Hall Trustees continue to use Keith Burgess to carry-out the annual electrical and emergency lighting tests.
 - **Guidance on The Commercial EPC** - The Parish Council does not take this matter further, based on advice from Richard Slater that the requirement for commercial energy performance certificates is not relevant for village halls.
- **Pavilion blinds**
Mr. Poulton was pleased to report that Ashley Blinds have satisfactorily fitted a complete new set of blinds on Monday 17th April. This was following the fiasco of ill fitting and mismatching blinds fitted on 25th February and their failure to rectify the problem on 1st April. One small blind needs to be fitted to the Main Hall door that leads to the changing room corridor. Mr. Poulton said that there has been a bonus to come out of the problems with the fitting of the new blinds. He managed to persuade

Richard Webb (Ashley Blinds) to install two of the blinds, originally fitted in the Pavilion on 25th February, in the meeting room at no cost to the Community Hall.

- **See-saw**

Mr. Poulton thanked Mr. Smith for replacing the missing bolt on the see-saw.

- **Condition of Oak tree on the Sportsfield**

The Clerk e-mailed Malcolm Amey (Landscape Officer, East Herts Council) requesting a written response to the Parish Council's letter concerning disease on one of the Oak trees on the sportsfield, however this matter remains outstanding.

The Clerk to write (not e-mail) Malcolm Amey requesting a response.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Sportsfield hedge**

Refer to item 9 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Identify volunteer projects in the village for Glaxo Smith Klein and Tesco volunteer teams.

- **Padlocking of the gate onto the sportsfield**

Following vandalism to two bollards on Abel Smith land in Mill Lane and the fear of people having vehicular access onto the sportsfield, a combination padlock has been purchased and fitted to the sportsfield gate.

The combination of the lock has been e-mailed to both the grass contractors, Frank Cooper and Son, and Martin Tipper (Cricket Club).

- **Weed killing around the MPPA, play area and Community Hall areas**

Mr. Poulton to instruct Ted Brown to do the weed killing.

Action: N. Poulton

- **Community Hall Asset register**

All Parish Councillors to be sent a copy of the Parish Council and Community Hall Asset Registers.

Action: J. Allsop

Parish Councillors to e-mail Mr. Poulton any changes required to the Asset Registers.

Action: Parish Councillors

Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **Sportsfield – maintenance program**

Mr. Knight and Mr. Smith have inspected the sportsfield and contacted Frank Cooper and Son obtaining a quotation of £794 (against a budget figure of £900) for raking, blind fertilising and rolling the sportsfield and turfing/seeding the goalmouth areas. Mr. Smith proposed that Frank Cooper and Son's quotation be accepted. Mr Meischke seconded the motion and all present were in favour. The work will be done between 18th and 30th April.

Action: I. Knight

- **No dog signs at the MPPA**

Mr. Knight said that the two 'No dog' signs, which are mounted back to back, have both been damaged. These were made of a soft plastic.

It was agreed to purchase two metal signs.

Action: J. Allsop

Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Litter bin on the Lammas**

This item was discussed under 6 b, Review of actions - Remove litterbin in the field by the Lammas.

- **Lammas bank steps/ Countryside Management Service/Volunteer teams**

Mrs. Dinnin said she had spoken to Fiona Underhill (Countryside Management Services) regarding a working party repairing the steps on the Lammas bank. However, Fiona Underhill misunderstood the location and instead the working party have done an excellent job of carrying out work to footpath 11, which runs along the back of Watton House and Watton Nursery.

Fiona Underhill promised to look at the Lammas steps but was not sure she would have enough time to repair the steps today. Mrs. Dinnin said that she would find out if the work had been done.

Action: C. Dinnin

Fiona Underhill has promised to post the P3 grant forms for 2011/12 to the Parish Council as soon as possible. Mrs. Dinnin to chase if necessary.

Action: C. Dinnin

- **Identify volunteer projects in the village for Glaxo Smith Kline and Tesco volunteer teams**

The following items were identified as possible projects for the volunteer teams.

- Painting of all the seats in the village.
- Hand weeding the War Memorial garden, in particular between the gravelled areas.
- Installing wooden posts and fencing or a live woven hedge in the gaps in the sportsfield hedge (this might be a suitable job for the Countryside Management Services teams).
- Painting the swings at the sportsfield play area.

Mrs. Dinnin to contact both the Glaxo Smith Kline and Tesco volunteer teams.

Action: C. Dinnin

b) Routine reports

i) Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke carried-out the emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests on Friday 8 April.

ii) Monthly village-report

Mr .Poulton completed the April report.

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

- **Cricket Shed surrounds:** The rubbish around cricket club has not been cleared. Refer to item 6 b, Review of actions - Speak to Rob Clayton re rubbish around Cricket Shed.
- **Grass in goalmouths:** Refer to item 9 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee - Sportsfield – maintenance programme.
- **Community Hall:**
 - A shoe has been thrown up onto the roof. No action required at the present time.
 - Egg has been thrown at the storage cupboard doors and two windows. The Clerk to ask the window cleaner (Gary Smith) if he is willing to clean off the egg remains whilst cleaning the Community Hall windows. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **MPPA:**
 - P. J. Fencing still need to replace the top tensioning wire of the MPPA fencing. Mr. Knight to chase. **Action: I. Knight**
 - There is a hole in the fencing on the door facing the sportsfield. Mr. Knight to inspect and arrange for the repair work to be done. **Action: I. Knight**
 - Broken 'No dog signs' - Refer to item 9 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee - No dog signs at the MPPA.
 - Weed killing – refer to item 9 a, Community Hall Trustees - Weed killing around the MPPA, play area and Community Hall areas
- **The Lammas** – a large amount of wood chippings have been laid at the Mill Lane entrance to the Lammas. Mrs. Dinnin said she had told Adam Welch he could put down wood chippings in this area. It was agreed that Mrs. Dinnin ask Adam Welch to refrain from putting further chippings down for the time being. **Action: C. Dinnin**
- **War Memorial**
 - One corner of the War Memorial stonework has broken off. The stonemason who last cleaned and repaired the memorial to be asked to inspect and repair the current damage. **Action: J. Allsop**
 - Bay tree growing in the War Memorial garden needs removing.

iii) Weekly sportsfield-report and action

None.

iv) 6-monthly check of MPPA, Play Area on sportsfield and Community Hall equipment

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke completed the report.

Only the adverse items highlighted in the 6-monthly check are minuted.

- **Sportsfield Play area:** – the safety-surface under the two spring-sit-ons needs repairing/replacing - A provision to be included in the 2012/13 budget. **Budget: 2012/13**
- **Community Hall**
 - **Main Hall** – the badminton court tape markings is loose in one corner.
 - **Showers:**
 - Away Team - 8 tiles are marked or chipped and 4 tiles cracked
 - Home Team – 12 tiles cracked.

v) **Website**

- Entry request by mobile fresh fish seller, Stuart Riley
After discussion, it was agreed not to include an entry about the mobile fresh fish seller on the Watton-at-Stone website.

Stuart Riley to be notified accordingly and forwarding him the contact details of the Parish News.

Action: J. Allsop

v) **Website diary**

Grit notices to be placed on the October agenda to agree to them being put up in the Community Hall and a similar notice placed in the November issue of the Parish News.

Action: J. Allsop

10 Correspondence received

a) **Consultations on Planning Applications**

Paul Burt, Development Control Business manager at East Herts Council e-mailed on 4th March as follows.

‘You may recall that we had previously consulted your Parish on the acceptability of consultation by e-mail (e-consultation). Your parish had previously expressed a preference for this service.

With less financial support coming from central government local authorities are again being asked to increase the amount of consultations made and received by electronic means. This does avoid delays/losses through the postal services thus speeding up the process and reduces the use of paper and storage space for local authorities and consultees. Local planning authorities are no longer able to request multiple hard copies of application documents and plans. This increases the costs and amount of work for planning authorities if we continue to consult in hard copy form.

All our planning applications are scanned within 3 working days from validation. We are now in a position to e-mail consultees with a link to view documents via the internet.

Please can you advise us by the 15th April 2001, preferably by e-mail, indicating if you are in a position to receive and respond to consultations by e-mail and/or view documents via the web?

Failure to respond may mean that you are not sent paper copies of plans with your notification letters.’

It was agreed that the Parish Council wish to continue to receive paper copies of all planning applications.

Action: J. Allsop

b) **Hertfordshire Wildlife Sites Partnership re Watton Green**

Mr. Meischke read out a letter from the Wildlife Trusts requesting dated 14th March requesting that they be given permission to carry out a wildlife survey at Watton Green.

The survey will include an expert botanical surveyor visiting the site and recording the presence of botanical species, assessing whether the ecological interest of the site has changed, and checking whether the wildlife site boundaries they have are correct. While on site their surveyors may also note any other species they observe, for example butterflies and birds.’

It was agreed that the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust be given permission to carry out the wildlife survey on Watton Green.

Action: J. Allsop

c) **The Wildlife Trusts – Water Vole Survey of Watton Common (the Lammas)**

Mr. Meischke read out a letter from the Wildlife Trusts requesting that they be given permission to carry out a Water Vole survey on the Lammas and enclosed an accompanying map highlighting the stretch of river to be surveyed.

Parish Councillors agreed that a Water Vole survey could be carried-out on Parish Council land. However, because not all of the section of the river highlighted on the map is in the Parish Council’s ownership, the areas which are not in the Parish Council ownership be crossed out.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Meischke will speak to Nick Fox (Abel Smith Estate) asking if they would give permission for their stretch of the river to be surveyed.

Action: J. Meischke

d) **Hertfordshire’s draft Bus strategy and intalink strategy consultation**

This item to be deferred to the May Parish Council meeting.

Agenda: 05/11

The Clerk to e-mail Parish Councillors a copy of the related correspondence.

Action: J. Allsop

e) **Mr. and Mrs. Aknai – walkway in Hazeldell**

Mr. Meischke read out the following e-mail (dated 6th April) from Sally and Peter Aknai.

‘We should like to draw the attention of Watton-at-Stone Parish Council to the dangerous state of the fence of No.105 Hazeldell, where the property borders the footpath. As it is badly broken, and not repaired or maintained, the parts protruding on to the footpath present a very real hazard to pedestrians, especially to children and elderly and infirm people. Damaged property unfortunately seems to invite vandalism, making matters even worse. It also gives a very bad impression of the neighbourhood.

We are not sure what the proper procedure is in this instance, and are requesting that the Parish Council please look into this matter urgently, and inform us of the proper course of action. We should be grateful to hear from you as soon as possible, before anyone is injured.'

Mr. Poulton said he had visited the site and, in his opinion, the fence is not a danger although it is bulging slightly over the footpath and the area looks very unsightly. He contacted East Herts Council, who informed him that this footpath is not their responsibility.

After discussion, it was agreed to e-mail Mr. and Mrs. Aknai suggesting that they contact Hertfordshire Highways as the Parish Council has no jurisdiction over private properties and no responsibilities for the footpaths.

Action: J. Allsop

11 Village organisations

- **Watton Youth Drop Inn**

The Watton Youth Drop Inn is closed for the Easter holidays. Their next meeting is on Wednesday 27th April.

The Has Beane Players have donated £100 towards the running costs of the club.

- **Watton-at-Stone School Governors:** Nothing to report.

- **Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Watch:** Nothing to report.

- **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**

Mr. Poulton said that the Scouts and Guide Group held it's AGM on Monday 28th March.

He said that the group are still looking to fill the vacant position of Chairman.

- **Watton-at-Stone Sports & Social Club**

Mr. Smith said that the frequency of the Sports and Social Club meetings has been reduced from once a month to once every three months and attendance levels are continuing to decline.

- **Police Authority:** Nothing to report.

- **River Beane Restoration Association:** Nothing to report.

12 Items for Parish News

There were four items identified for inclusion in the May 2011 issue of the Parish News.

- Results of the Housing needs survey

- Police report

- District and Parish Council elections

- New blinds in the Community Hall

The Clerk to write the entries accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

- **The meeting closed at 2130.**

- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 10th May 2011.**