

## Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2011

Present:	Mr. Michael Smith (Chairman)	Mrs. Christine Dinnin
	Mr. Denis Filer	Mr. Iain Harris
	Mr. Ian Knight	Mrs. Helen McCash
	Mr. Nigel Poulton	Mr. David Stock
		The Clerk (Mrs. Jane Allsop)
Police:	Sergeant Jamie Bartlett (until 1944)	
Press:	Sara Black (Hertfordshire Mercury)	

### 1 Apologies for absence and leave of absence

Apologies for absence from Mr. John Meischke and Ms. Emma Waltham.

### 2 Public Participation

None.

### 3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

Mr. Smith had two additional items.

- East Herts Strategic Land Availability assessment (SLAA) Partnership: Expression of interest
- Large Fire Safe

Both the above items to be taken under correspondence received.

### 4 Declaration of Interests

Mr. Smith declared a pecuniary interest in item 8a, Environment Sub-Committee – Grass cutting on the Lammas and Watton Green.

### 5 Presentation re Special Constables by Chief Inspector Geoff Camp and Sergeant Jamie Bartlett

Mr. Smith welcomed Sergeant Jamie Bartlett to the meeting

Sergeant Bartlett said that Chief Inspector Geoff Camp gave his apologies for not being able to attend the meeting tonight, but he had been called away on duty.

Sergeant Bartlett handed out fliers on the new 101 non-emergency number launched by Hertfordshire Police, which aims at making the service easier to use and more efficient. 101 will replace the current non-emergency number, 0845 33 00 222.

The Clerk to place copies of the flier on the Parish Council notice boards.

**Action: J. Allsop**

Sergeant Bartlett explained that he previously worked in St. Albans where he was responsible for the officers and PCSOs across five neighbourhoods in the city.

He has now taken on the role of Hertfordshire Constabulary's first ever dedicated Rural, Wildlife and Environmental Crimes Coordinator. As a Wildlife Crimes officer since 1989, he jumped at the chance to do the role full-time.

Sergeant Bartlett explained about the role of a rural Special Constable, which includes covering the farming areas as well as the local villages. Hertfordshire Constabulary would provide training and a contribution to the annual costs would come from the Parish Council. Applicants are usually aged between 18 and 62 years and are encouraged to apply within their local area. Currently there are 35 Special Constables serving in Hertfordshire (4 or 5 of these being in East Hertfordshire). One of these is a gamekeeper who has a special advantage because he knows all the local farmers and this helps him in patrolling the area. He has been provided with a police Land Rover, which the local Parish Council have been helping to fund. The police are particularly keen to recruit Special Constables on horse back.

The rural calendar of theft can be quite seasonal. For example, the saddle and tack season is just finishing and will be followed by the diesel theft season. Later in the year, it will be the Hare coursing season.

Mr. Filer asked how the Parish Council could pursue having a rural Special Constable for Watton-at-Stone.

Mr. Filer said that at the launch of the Hertfordshire Policing Plan for 2011-14 on 28<sup>th</sup> March it was commented that even if Parishes combined, they would find difficulty in funding a PCSO at £25,000 per annum.

Sergeant Bartlett said that the Parish Council would need to advertise locally. Applicants would then need to be put through a series of interviews before they are accepted on the training programme.

Concern was shown by Parish Councillors that we could be using taxpayers' money for a scheme that was later dropped by the government. Sergeant Bartlett assured Parish Councillors that for the foreseeable future, Special Constables were going to play an important role in policing especially in the rural areas.

Mrs. McCash said that Watton-at-Stone have been experiencing problems in communicating with both their PC and PCSO for this area. This has been since their previous PCSO, who was local to the area, left to take a two-year sabbatical.

Sergeant Bartlett agreed to give Mrs. McCash the contact details for PC Andy Woodward's superior officer, Sergeant Andy Palfreyman. **Action: Sergeant Bartlett**

Mrs. McCash said that her recent e-mails to PCSO Sally Brooks have failed to be delivered. Sergeant Bartlett agreed to investigate. **Action: Sergeant Bartlett**

Mrs. McCash said that approximately five years ago she set up the Neighbourhood Watch scheme in Watton-at-Stone. However, links between the scheme and the police coordinating system are now failing.

Sergeant Bartlett agreed to write an article on Special Constable to be included in the September issue of the parish news. **Action: Sergeant Bartlett**

Sergeant Bartlett left the meeting.

## 6 Minutes of the last meeting

### a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2011**  
Mrs. McCash proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.  
Mr. Filer seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

### b) Review of actions

1. **Amend standing orders: completed.**
2. **Contact the Environment Agency re water vole survey**  
Mr. Meischke was not present at the meeting to report on this item. **Action: J. Meischke**
3. **Copy part one of the new Standing Orders booklet and upload it to the Google documents**  
This item to be completed before the September Parish Council meeting. **Action: J. Allsop**
4. **Type up part two of the new Standing Orders booklet**  
Mr. Poulton agreed to mark up a copy of part two of the new standing orders booklet as appropriate. **Action: N. Poulton**  
The Clerk to type up the amended version of part two of the new standing orders booklet. **Action: J. Allsop**
5. **Arrange for Parish Councillors to sign Santander bank signatory forms**  
Refer to item 9 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee - Santander bank signatories.
6. **Amend letter to allotment holders and show it to Mrs. Dinnin**  
Refer to item 9 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Letter to Allotment holders re water usage.
7. **Draft an amendment to the Allotment tenancy agreement and show it to Mrs. Dinnin & Mr. Harris**  
Refer to item 9 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Amendment to tenancy agreement.
8. **Contact Adam Welch about flowerbed maintenance in particular the War Memorial garden**  
Mrs. Dinnin said she did not have to contact Adam Welch about the flowerbed maintenance because, when she returned from holiday last month, he had already done the work.  
Some additional weeding needs doing in the gravel area around the War Memorial. Glaxo Smith Kline have been asked to do this work on one of their volunteer days, but in the meantime ask Adam Welch to weed-kill and tidy this area up. **Action: C. Dinnin**
9. **Give the Clerk a 'head and shoulder' picture for the Watton-at-Stone website before the September Parish Council meeting**  
Mr. Poulton gave the Clerk a 'head and shoulder' picture of himself.  
All Parish Councillors to provide a digital 'head and shoulder' image of themselves prior to the September Parish Council meeting. **Action: Parish Councillors**
10. **Up load Parish Councillors photos to the Watton-at-Stone website** **Action: J. Allsop**

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

None.

**d) Action points resolved**

- 1. Instruct East Herts Council to arrange annual play equipment inspection**
- 2. Write to Pauline Bunce re Community service on 3rd June**
- 3. E-mail Peter Knight about the scout and guide night-hike**
- 4. E-mail Parish Councillors re e-consultation planning application notifications**
- 5. Print off hardcopies of all on-line planning applications and give them to the planning co-ordinator**
- 6. E-mail Parish Councillors required amendment to standing orders**
- 7. Give Mr. Poulton a copy of his Notice of Registrable Interests**
- 8. Amend as required Notice of Registrable Interests**
- 9. Arrange for the Sports and Social Club hire agreements to be signed**
- 10. Meet with Inspector John Speed to discuss low police detection rates**  
 Mrs. McCash said she had not met with Inspector Speed. Instead, as agreed earlier in the meeting, Sergeant Jamie Bartlett will give Mrs. McCash the contact details for PC Andy Woodward's Sergeant, Andrew Palfreyman, so she can arrange a meeting with him to discuss the low police detection rates and other issues concerning Watton-at-Stone. **Action: H. McCash**
- 11. Purchase dog-waste bin from Wybone**  
 Mr. Smith and Mr. Poulton to liaise over fitting the bin. **Action: M. Smith/N. Poulton**
- 12. If required, chase Brian Bunyan re agreed work at the Community Hall**
- 13. Planning application – 1 High Street**
- 14. Planning application – Land to south of Station Road**
- 15. Planning application – 22 Rivershill**
- 16. Design jubilee volunteer flier**  
 Mr. Smith said that Miss Waltham had produced the wording for the flier inviting residents to attend a meeting in September to discuss the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in the village.  
 Mrs. Dinnin said she placed an article in the April 2011 edition of the Parish News asking residents to come forward with ideas for celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. At the April Parish Council meeting she reported that two people had volunteered to help with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebration but neither of them had any suggestions for what we could do. The volunteers to be invited to the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebration meeting in September. **Action: C. Dinnin**  
 Mr. Smith and Mr. Knight to liaise over the layout and printing of the flier and confirm a date for the meeting. **Action: M. Smith/I. Knight**
- 17. From July onwards, modify Parish Council agenda re actions points**
- 18. Copy section two of new standing orders and e-mail to all Parish Councillors**  
 The Clerk reported that she was having trouble with the computer scanner and therefore she had made photocopies of section two of the new standing orders instead of a digital copy. These were distributed to Parish Councillors present at the meeting.  
 The Clerk to give copies of section two of the new standing orders to Mr. Meischke and Miss Waltham. **Action: J. Allsop**
- 19. Invite Assistant Chief Constable Chris Miller to attend July meeting to discuss Special Constables**
- 20. Erect a barrier from the sportsfield to School Lane**
- 21. Inspect see-saw**
- 22. Speak to the new owners of the High Street property re growth overhanging the allotment entrance**
- 23. Write to Glebe Court re growth overhanging allotment entrance**
- 24. Write to Oliver Heald re street lighting changes**
- 25. E-mail Steve Shaw in support of the proposals re large planning applications**
- 26. Attend Sports and Social Club meeting on 5th July**
- 27. Meet with Ms. Waltham to go through the role of the Parish Council**  
 Mr. Poulton has arranged to meet Ms. Waltham 1<sup>st</sup> August. **Action: N. Poulton**

## 7 Planning

### a) Applications

#### i) 31 Lammas Road (3/11/1073/FP)

Single storey and two storey rear extensions and new first floor side windows

Mr. Harris e-mailed all Parish Councillors on 1<sup>st</sup> July as follows.

‘I have reviewed the new application.

The difference between this and the previous one is that instead of a flat roof there is a gable end to the rear elevation. According to the application this follows advice.

When I called upon the neighbours on the previous application, they had no problems with the proposed extension – I believe that each said they could not see it.

Pursuant to our protocol, I have chosen not to visit the neighbours again.

May I invite 2 other councillors to confirm their agreement to our Clerk being asked to relay a “No comment” response to EHDC.’

Endorsement of Mr. Harris’ recommendation was given by more than two Parish Councillors and the Clerk wrote to East Herts Council accordingly.

### b) Decisions

#### i) 110, Great Innings North (3/11/0773/FP)

Part two-storey, part single-storey side extension

-East Herts Council permission granted

#### ii) 113, High Street( 3/11/0783/LB)

Internal refurbishment including removal of existing internal walls to enlarge kitchen, addition of 3 no. new fixed seating areas, blocking up of existing doorways, new stud partition and door to form disabled WC and installation of new floor finishes

-East Herts Council permission granted

#### iii) 1, High Street (3/11/0772/FP)

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

-East Herts Council permission granted

## 8 Specific items

### a) Parish Council representatives to other organisations

Mr. Knight proposed that Ms. Waltham be appointed as the Parish Council representative on the Sports and Social Club. Mr. Smith seconded the motion and all present were in favour. Ms. Waltham was duly appointed.

### b) Inter-Parish conference

At the November 2010 Parish Council meeting, Mr. Poulton brought to Parish Councillors’ attention that the 2010 Inter Parish Conference never took place. Aston Parish Council, who hosted the 2009 Inter Parish Conference, forgot to arrange who would host the 2010 conference.

Mr. Poulton said that the Inter Parish Conference has historically been very successful event because it brings together the local Parish Council’s in East Herts so they can air their views and discuss similar problems.

After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed to write in December to all East Herts Parish Councils normally invited to the Inter-Parish Conference asking them if they would be interested in attending a conference hosted by Watton-at-Stone in early 2012.

**Action: M. Smith/J. Allsop/12/2011**

This item to be placed on the December 2011 agenda.

**Agenda: 12/2011**

## 9 Reports

### a) Sub-Committees

#### Budget & Finance

Mr. Filer reported on the following items.

#### • Monthly accounts

#### Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Cheques issued		
Frank Cooper and son	Grass cutting 10th, 17th, 25th June	172.80
Post Office	Tax and NI for April, May and June 2011	276.12
St. Albans Diocesan Board	6 months Allotment rent	300.00
Adam Welch	Remove trees on allotments, re-stake maple tree, re-cut the Lammas steps	370.00
Concord trophies	Engraving and purchase of keep-sake trophies	58.57
Adam Welch	1/2 of £2903 for annual Watton maintenance schedule	1,451.50
Wybone Limited	Dog waste bin	186.78
Wages and Salaries	June 2011	1074.44
J. Allsop	24 x 1 <sup>st</sup> class stamps	11.04
		<b><u>3,901.25</u></b>

**Cheques received**

East Herts Council	Rubbish collection	£1,282.26
Sports and Social Club	Reimbursement re clearance work carried out by Ted Brown around the Cricket Shed	25.00
		<b><u>£1,307.26</u></b>

**Watton-at-Stone Community Hall**

**Petty Cash – Receipts**

Floodlighting to 19/07/11	50.00
Jim Keen – Main Hall	60.00
Barbara Smart – Pavilion	48.00
Oasis – Pavilion	24.50
Sandra Smith – Meeting room	20.00
Victoria Stuart – Main Hall	6.00
D. Eversley - Main Hall & Pavilion	39.00
Craft club – Meeting room	15.00
Knit and natter – Meeting room	20.00
Sharon Ling –Pavilion	<u>80.00</u>
	<b><u>362.50</u></b>

**Petty Cash –Payments**

None

**Cheques issued**

British Gas	Gas supply	165.05
Wages	July 2011	336.60
Veolia Water	Water supply	107.27
Herts Fire Protection	Annual fire inspection plus new equipment	170.30
Gary Smith	Window cleaning	58.00
James A Turner	fit new thermostat in Pavilion	112.80
		<b><u>950.02</u></b>

**Cheques received**

Badminton Club	Main Hall hire	108.00
East Herts Council	grant for Pavilion blinds	1,562.87
Watton School	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	67.50
Mrs Diamond	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	80.00
		<b><u>1,818.37</u></b>

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

• **Quarterly accounts - Parish Council and Community Hall**

Mr. Filer went through the expenditure and income items for the Parish Council and the Community Hall accounts. He explained that the first-quarter accounts are not a good reflection of 25% of the year's income and expenditure. For example, the Precept is paid twice a year, representing 50% of the total income and seasonal expenditure items such as grass cutting do not occur during the winter months. The Community Hall's Main Hall and Pavilion hiring income will be considerably lower in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter due to fewer lettings during the summer holidays.

Insurance premiums for both the Parish Council and Community Hall are well below budget.

• **Report on 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly inspection of Parish Council and Community Hall accounts**

Mrs. McCash said that she carried-out the 1<sup>st</sup> quarterly inspection of the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts on 13<sup>th</sup> July yesterday and the accounts were in good order.

A copy of Mrs. McCash's report to be included in the Community Hall and Parish Council accounts for 2011/12.

**Action: J. Allsop**

• **Santander bank signatories**

The Clerk contacted Santander who confirmed that the bank signatory forms can be copied to allow for the signatories required.

As agreed at the June Parish Council meeting, all Parish Councillors to become signatories on the Santander accounts for the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council current and instant access accounts and the Watton-at-Stone Community Hall current account.

The Clerk to obtain the signatures required.

**Action: J. Allsop**

• **BDO – Annual Audit return**

Mr Filer said that the Parish Council's annual return had been returned to the Clerk because of an error in the fixed asset entry on the return. He then read out BDO LLP's comments as follows.

**‘What is the audit point outstanding?’**

Fixed Assets have increase by £8,547, an explanation for which was not detailed in the information provided. Please also note the change in requirements for fixed assets this year and ensure your figures in box 9 comply with these. We have included our audit briefing in with this letter for details regarding this change.

**What is required to resolve the matter?**

Please provide a detailed breakdown of the increase. Including the amounts involved. Should you not be in compliance with the new regulations as explained in the briefing then both this and last years boxes would have to be changed, with restated being written at the top of the prior year's column. Please contact us if you have any problems regarding this.

**Why is this required?**

We are required to understand why there has been an increase or decrease in the accounting statements.'

Mr. Filer explained that historically all assets have been included at cost or current value. The new regulations require each asset owned by the Parish Council to be recorded on the asset register at its original purchase cost. In the event that the original purchase cost is unknown, the council should take appropriate advice to establish a current value for the asset. This value will act as a proxy for the original purchase cost and remain unchanged until disposal. Community assets such as War Memorials or land such as a village green should be listed at a nominal value of £1.

Mr. Filer said that the total fixed assets value recorded under item 9 of the Annual return was originally £96,850. This has now been reduced to £55,889 to take into account the new regulations.

Having first sought the approval of members of the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee as well as the internal auditor, Jim Morrissey, Mr. Filer wrote to BDO LLP in his capacity of Chairman of the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee as follows.

'We refer to your letter dated 4<sup>th</sup> July 2011 ref F4/WATT03/NH/Q1 in which you queried the increase in fixed assets in Section1 item 9 of our return.

We were conscious in completing this section of the Audit Commission Annual Return that the guidance notes on fixed assets referred to Book Value.

Book Value is an historical figure referring to the original cost of an asset and in the case of companies can be subject to depreciation. However, parish council accounts are invariably simple Income/Expenditure accounts and a book value figure has no relevance in this type of account.

Accordingly, we decided to insert at Section1 item 9 a figure that represented the current/replacement cost of our fixed assets. This is a figure of relevance to Parish Councils, particularly when it comes to the insurance of our assets. In a way, this replacement figure could be seen as a book value that has been appreciated to give a true value of the assets.

We recognize that the new accounting convention change as listed in your new guidance booklet is to use book value in the annual return and thus the figure that should be inserted in Section 1 Item 9 is £55,889 for this year and last year in place of the figures that we have quoted. We have therefore changed the return accordingly.

We have discussed this with our auditor James Morrissey FCA and he accepts the points we are making and the alterations made.'

**Community Hall Trustees**

Mr. Poulton reported on the following item.

- **Report and minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> July**

The following amendment was made to the minutes of the meeting.

- Page 2, item 12, first word of second line, delete the word 'is'.
- Page 2, item 14, last line of the first paragraph, 'sort' should read 'sought'.

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

Mr. Poulton reported on the following items discussed at the Community Hall Trustees meeting.

- **Barrier from School Lane to the sportsfield**

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Smith have installed the new steel barrier. Mr. Poulton thanked Mr. Smith for making the barrier out of the old steel goal posts.

- **Condition of Oak tree in Sportsfield**

The Clerk contacted two local Arboriculturists, but only one responded. Mr. Poulton met on site with Richard Wilson of C'Trees, who said that the Oak tree on the sportsfield was over 300 years old and one of the nicest specimens he had seen. He confirmed that the tree has a small Ganoderma Adspersum bracket visible at the base of the tree and recommended a full Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) and Picus Sonic Tomography. This work together will cost approximately £150 plus an additional £180 for a written report.

The Picus Sonic Tomography will show what is happening inside the Oak tree. The worst scenario being that the fungus infection is in an advanced stage and the tree is in danger of falling down and needs removing immediately.

Mr. Poulton said that until we have received a diagnostic we will not know if the tree needs treating or not. Some Parish Councillors expressed concern about the cost implications of treating the tree. It was agreed to ask Richard Wilson.

**Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Stock proposed that subject to a written quotation from Richard Wilson, confirming his verbal quotation, we ask him to proceed with the work required. Mrs. Dinnin seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Richard Wilson has also suggested the elder from around the base should be removed, although it is not doing any actual harm to the Oak tree. It was agreed to ask Ted Brown to do this work.

**Action: N. Poulton**

- **Replacement of Thermostat for the Pavilion area**

James Turner Limited has replaced the broken thermostat in the Pavilion. Mr. Poulton said that thermostat might have been damaged by lightening in June.

- **Vandalism**

Mr. Poulton was sorry to report that more vandalism was discovered at the Community Hall today. The notice boards have had the surface scratched, presumably by a knife, over the faces of our District Councillor and Police officers, PC Andy Woodward and PCSO Sally Brooks. In addition to this, there is graffiti on both notice boards and on the door of the Gents toilet. Stickers with graffiti on them have also been stuck to the Community Hall windows. Mr. Poulton said that these stickers are extremely difficult to remove.

## Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following item.

- **Sportsfield - boot brushes**

Mr. Knight has replaced all of the boot scraper brushes with new ones. However, the boot scraper near the MPPA is short of one brush. One of the new sets of brushes had five brushes instead of six.

## Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Step on Lammas Bank**

Adam Welch has cut away the steps on the Lammas bank. However, one of the wooden pegs that supports the step supports has worn away and needs replacing. Mrs. Dinnin agreed to contact the Countryside Management Service, asking them to supply and install a new peg.

**Action: C. Dinnin**

- **Allotments**

- **Letter to Allotment holders re water usage**

Mrs. Dinnin and the Clerk hand delivered the following letter to all allotment holders in Watton-at-Stone on 12<sup>th</sup> July. The letter was posted to all those living outside the village.

‘The Parish Council has received a letter from Rumball Sedgwick regarding the renewal of the lease of the allotment site. For those of you who do not know the St. Albans Diocesan Board own the land and Rumball Sedgwick are their agents and the Parish Council are the leaseholders.

The new lease is a 15 year lease and is in substantially the same terms as before, with the only major change being that the Diocesan Board who have always paid for the water on the allotments are now insisting that the Parish Council take on this responsibility.

Water on the allotments is metered and for the last 12 months 16.03.2010 - 18.03.2011 cost £470. These charges have been increasing over the past years so we are estimating a bill in the region of £500 for 2011, therefore the Parish Council has no option but to charge this proportionately to each tenant and we calculate the charge will be £13 per year for a large plot and £6.50 for the smaller ones. This water charge will be reviewed annually and it is hoped that with careful usage the figure could be reduced.

We hope that you all find these new arrangements acceptable and new tenancy agreements will be drawn up to this effect and will be issued with the annual rental invoice later in the year.

Please contact the Parish Clerk if you have any queries concerning this matter.’

No comments have been received from allotment holders.

- **Amendment to tenancy agreement**

Mrs. Dinnin proposed that the following text be included in the allotment tenancy agreement, which all allotment holders will be required to sign in October 2011. Mr. Smith seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

‘To have consideration for the other allotment holders at all times especially with respect to metered water usage. We encourage the installation of water butts, but sprinklers are not permitted.

In order to minimise water usage please try and use water before 08.00am or after 20.00pm during the summer months. Water will be turned off from the 1st November to the 1st March.

Allotment holders are asked to have due attention to annoyance from bonfire smoke or sprays and spread of weeds either by seeding or plant growth.’

This text will replace items 4 and 5 of the current tenancy agreement, which read as follows.

‘3. To have consideration for other allotment holders at all times especially with respect to hosepipe usage, annoyance from smoke or sprays and spread of weeds either by seeding or plant growth.

4. To restrict the burning of non-compostable plant material to times and periods as specified by the council and at all times avoid annoyance to neighbouring residential premises from smoke.’

- **Response to Rumball Sedgwick’s letter re terms of the new allotment lease**

Rumball Sedgwick to be informed that all allotment holders have been advised that they will now be expected to pay for water usage on their plots and therefore the Parish Council is now in a position to receive the draft allotment lease. **Action: J. Allsop**

## b) Routine reports

### i) Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Smith carried-out the emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests prior to this meeting.

### ii) Monthly village-report

Mr. Knight completed the report on 18<sup>th</sup> July.

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

- **War memorial** – the gravelled area needs weeding.

This item is included on the list of volunteer jobs that GSK (GlaxoSmithKline) have agreed to do.

- **Fencing around manhole on sportsfield**

The fencing around the manhole on the sportsfield belongs to the Cricket Club.

Mr. Poulton agreed to remove the fencing and leave it by the Cricket shed. **Action: N. Poulton**

Mr. Knight to advise Martin Tipper (Cricket Club) that the fencing is being removed. **Action: I. Knight**

### iii) Weekly sportsfield-report and action

None.

### iv) Website

- **History**

Mr. Stock said that Mr. Dunhill has completed the ‘History’ section of the website and given the Clerk a copy on CD. The section, which comprises a combination of material that already existed, has been uploaded onto the website accordingly.

This means that all of the original sections of the website have now been completed.

- **Peacemakers**

It was agreed to delete the item ‘Peacemakers’ from the Churches and Religion section of the website because, after extensive searching, no information or evidence of a local group has been found. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Flower festival**

Mrs. McCash to give the Clerk more details of the flower festival for uploading to the ‘Village Events’ section of the website. **Action: H. McCash**

### v) Website diary

None.

## 10 Correspondence received

### a) Robert Adams re ferreting

Mr. R. Adams wrote on 23<sup>rd</sup> June as follows.

#### **Rabbits caught by ferreting in 2010/11**

These are the figures for the season as above.

- Lammas 49 rabbits
- Paddock end of the Lammas 71 rabbits
- Allotments 8 rabbits and 6 rats.
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### b) Hertfordshire County Council – How will your child get to school from September 2012

Justine Donovan (Chief Education Officer, Hertfordshire County Council) wrote on 27<sup>th</sup> June concerning school transport from September 2012. All Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of this letter prior to the meeting.

### c) Mrs Gillian Day re overgrown hedges around Hockerill

Mrs. Gillian Day wrote in early July 2011 as follows.

‘I am writing to you as Clerk to the Parish Council about the state of the hedges and footpaths around Hockerill, especially the footpath between the George and Dragon car park and the house at Old School Orchard. This path is so overgrown that it is almost impossible to walk through. I have a skin complaint on my arms and legs and am worried about getting scratched by the brambles and bushes and getting an infection as they overhang the path.’

My friends and I would be very grateful if this could be attended to. I have lived in the village all my life and have never seen it in such a mess.

Mrs. Day’s letter has been forward to Eralp Yucelt of Hertfordshire Highways, via e-mail, and the following response was received on 14<sup>th</sup> July.

‘I will ask the area engineer to check this location and attend to the overgrown vegetation problems if required.’

It was agreed inform Mrs. Day, in writing, of the action that has been taken.

**Action: J. Allsop**

### d) East Herts Council - Development Control Committee - 20 July 2011

East Herts Council will no longer be writing to advise the Parish Council of upcoming dates for Development Control committee meetings. The dates for these meetings can now be accessed on-line.

Mr. Poulton said that as a District Councillor he is forwarded the dates of all meetings. He agreed to forward these dates to all Parish Councillors.

**Action: N. Poulton**

### e) E-mail from Andrew Bott (dated 13th June) re single wind turbine planning application in High Elms Lane

All Parish Councillors have been copied with an e-mail from Andrew Bott (dated 13<sup>th</sup> June) as follows.

‘A short email to inform you that we expect to submit a planning application for a single wind turbine on High Elms lane with in the next ten days.

The turbine will be 86.5m tall and will produce enough electricity for 346 houses. It will comfortably offset the farms carbon dioxide emissions.

We hope you will be able to support this new scheme which takes into account the planning Inspectors findings and the pre planning advice of the Councils planning office.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me on this email address or telephone number 07785 935 675.’

Mr. Poulton said that the plans for the wind turbine have now been received by East Herts Council and are currently being verified.

Because the Parish Council does not meet in August, it was agreed to hold an Extraordinary Parish Council meeting on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> August 1930 in the Pavilion.

Notices advertising the meeting to be put up on the Parish Council notices boards a week before the meeting.

**Action: J. Allsop**

## East Herts Strategic Land Availability assessment (SLAA) Partnership: Expression of interest

Mr. Smith said that East Herts Council wrote on 11<sup>th</sup> March concerning establishing management groups to assess land availability for development. However, District, Town and Parish Councillors will not form part of the partnership.

Mr. Poulton said that councillors have already put forward their ideas which are the basis of a framework and now professional voluntary advice is being sort.

### Large Fire Safe

Mr. Smith said that he is in possession of a very substantial fire-proof safe, which he is willing to sell to the Parish Council for £50. Mr. Poulton said that because of its size the safe would be ideal for storing Parish Council documents. Some Parish Council documents are currently stored in the floor safe in the meeting room, where they are getting damp.

Mrs. McCash proposed we purchase the safe from Mr. Smith. Mr. Poulton seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

It was agreed that the safe be put in the internal storeroom.

**Action: M. Smith/N. Poulton**

## 11 Village organisations

- **Watton Youth Drop Inn**

The Watton Youth Drop Inn will be closed during the summer school holidays. Their last session before the break is on 20<sup>th</sup> July and sessions resume on 7<sup>th</sup> September.

- **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**

The War Memorial Hall will be closing for 10 days during August while the floor is renovated.

Some of the recently installed emergency lighting in the War Memorial Hall fell down because it had been stuck to the wall and not screwed into it. This has now been rectified by the fitter, Keith Burgess.

- **Watton-at-Stone Pre-School Playgroup:** Nothing to report.

- **Watton-at-Stone Scout & Guide Group**

Mr. Poulton reported that the current Scout and Guide Group Secretary has resigned and the group are now seeking to elect a Secretary as well as a Chairman.

- **Watton-at-Stone Sports & Social Club:** Nothing to report.

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

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

## 12 Items for Parish News

There were two items identified for inclusion in the September 2011 issue of the Parish News.

- Special Constables - article to be supplied by Sergeant Jamie Bartlett.

- Benington Wind Farm – article to be written after the extraordinary Parish Council meeting takes place on 10<sup>th</sup> August.

**Action: J. Allsop**

In addition, Mr. Knight is arranging for the flier advertising the September meeting to discuss ideas for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations to be inserted in the September 2011 issue of the Parish News.

**Action: I. Knight**

- **The meeting closed at 2102.**

- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2011.**