

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 20th September 2011

Present: Mr. Michael Smith (Chairman) Mrs. Christine Dinnin
 Mr. Denis Filer Mr. Iain Harris
 Mr. Ian Knight Mr. John Meischke
 Mr. David Stock Ms. Emma Waltham
 The Clerk (Mrs. Jane Allsop)

1 Apologies for absence and leave of absence

Apologies for absence from Mr. Nigel Poulton and Mrs. Helen McCash..

2 Public Participation

None.

3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

Mr. Smith had five additional items.

- **Letter from Hannah Brownlow**
This item to be discussed under 9 d, Correspondence received.
- **Willow tree on the Lammas**
This item to be discussed under Environment Sub-Committee.
- **Naming of roads on the new Station Road development**
This item to be discussed under 9 e, Correspondence received.
- **Annual Playground inspection**
This item to be discussed under 9 f, Correspondence received.
- **Glebe Court Coffee morning**
This item to be discussed under 9 g, Correspondence received.

4 Declaration of Interests

None.

5 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 19th July 2011**
Mr. Filer proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.
Mr. Meischke seconded the motion and all present were in favour.
- **Minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 10th August 2011**
Mr. Filer proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.
Mr. Meischke seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

b) Review of actions

1. **Contact the Environment Agency re water vole survey**
Mr. Meischke said that after numerous attempts, he has finally managed to contact the Environment Agency about the water vole survey being carried out on the Lammas stretch of the River Beane.
Mr. Meischke has informed the Environment Agency that the Abel Smith Estate, Game Keeper, Mr. Nick Fox, is aware that the water vole survey is being carried out and is interested in the results.
The agency have said they will be in touch.
The Parish Council should also receive a report for the water vole survey done on the Lammas stretch of the River Beane.
2. **Copy part one of the new Standing Orders booklet and upload it to the Google documents**
Mr. Poulton has amended the new standing orders and this document is currently on circulation to enable Parish Councillors to comment and make any further corrections as required.
When this document has been returned to the Clerk, she will update the document and e-mail it to councillors. **Action: J. Allsop**
3. **Type-up the amended version of part two of the new standing orders booklet**
This action is outstanding. **Action: J. Allsop**
4. **Arrange to meet Sergeant Palfreyman re policing issues concerning Watton-at-Stone**
Mrs. McCash was not present at the meeting to report on this item. **Action: H. McCash**

5. **Invite volunteers to the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebration meeting**
Refer to item 7b, Specific items - Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations - meeting and flyer.
6. **Obtain the bank signatures required**
Refer to item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee – Santander bank signatories
7. **Contact CMS re wooden pegs required for steps on the Lammas Bank**
Mrs. Dinnin said that because the steps were dangerous, she instructed Adam Welch to repair them. This work has now been done at a cost of £60.
8. **Arrange for the flier re Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations to be inserted in the September Parish News**
Refer to item 7b, Specific items - Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations - meeting and flyer.

c) Action points outstanding for more than two months

None.

d) Action points resolved

1. **Put up Police flier re Special Constables on Parish Council notice board**
2. **Give Mrs. McCash the contact details for Sergeant Andy Palfreyman**
3. **Write an article on Special Constable for the September issue of the Parish News**
4. **Mark-up a copy of part two of the new standing orders booklet as appropriate**
5. **Ask Adam Welch to weed-kill and tidy around the War Memorial**
6. **Provide a digital 'head and shoulder' image for Watton-at-Stone website**
Mr. Meischke, Mr. Knight and Mrs. Dinnin have not yet provided photographs of themselves.
Action: J. Meischke/C. Dinnin/I. Knight
7. **Upload Parish Councillors photos to the Watton-at-Stone website**
8. **Install new dog-waste bin on sportsfield**
9. **Liaise over the layout and printing of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee flier and agree meeting date**
10. **Meet with Ms. Waltham on 1st August**
11. **Include 1st Quarterly inspection reports in the annual accounts**
12. **Contact Richard Wilson of C'Trees re work to Oak tree**
13. **Ask Ted Brown to cut back elder from base of Oak tree on sportsfield**
14. **Write to Rumball Sedgwick re terms of new allotment lease**
15. **Remove the fencing around the manhole on the sportsfield**
16. **Advise Martin Tipper (Cricket Club) that the fencing is being removed**
17. **Delete the item 'Peacemakers' from the Watton-at-Stone website**
18. **Give the Clerk more details of the flower festival for uploading to the Watton-at-Stone website**
19. **Contact Mrs. Day re overgrown hedges around Hockerill**
20. **Forward all Development Control committee meetings dates to Parish Councillors**
21. **Put up agenda notice for Extraordinary Parish Council meeting on Wednesday 10th August**
22. **Install large fire-proof safe in the internal storeroom**
23. **Write articles for inclusion in the September 2011 issue of the Parish News**
24. **Write to East Herts Council planning department re Benington Wind Turbine (3/11/1190/FP)**

6 Planning

a) Applications

Parish Councillors (with the exception of Mr. Denis Filer, Mr. Iain Harris and Mr. Ian Knight) viewed the following applications at their meeting on 10th August.

- i) **55 Rivershill (3/11/171/FN)**
Single-storey rear extension and laterartion to form new opening to existing bedroom
East Herts Council informed via e-mail, that the Parish Council have no comment on the application.
- ii) **34 Moorymead Close (3/11/1325/FP)**

Conversion of garage to form a study/gym

East Herts Council informed via e-mail, that the Parish Council objects to this garage being converted into living accommodation as it would ultimately lead to an increase in on-street parking.

iii) The Bull Hotel, 113, High Street (3/11/1331/AD)

Erection of illuminated & non illuminated signs to the exterior of the building

East Herts Council informed via e-mail, that the Parish Council have no comment on the application.

iv) The Bull Hotel, 113, High Street (3/11/1359/LB) – listed building consent

Erection of illuminated & non illuminated signs to the exterior of the building

East Herts Council informed via e-mail, that the Parish Council have no comment on the application.

b) Decisions

i) 22 Rivershill (3/11/0967/FP)

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

-East Herts Council permission granted

ii) Land to south of, Station Road, Watton At Stone (3/11/0872/RP)

The erection of 111 residential units with landscaping, amenity infrastructure and parking

-East Herts Council permission granted

iii) 31 Lammas Road (3/11/1073/FP)

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

-East Herts Council permission granted

c) Appeals

i) 22 Rivershill (3/11/0508/FP)

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

-Appeal dismissed

Meeting held on 12th September to discuss the Wind Turbine application for the Land East of Walkern Road and North and, West of High Elms Lane, Benington (3/11/1190/FP)

Mr. Harris said he attended the East Herts Council meeting on Monday 12th September and that there was a lot of misinformation from both sides of the debate.

Overall the inefficiency of wind turbines when there are low to medium wind speeds, verses the disruption to the local environment and the huge grants provided to land owners is making their installation look distasteful.

7 Specific items

a) Report on East Herts Rural Parish Conference held on 15th September

Mr. Smith said he attended the East Herts Rural Parish conference, which was held in Datchworth commencing at 1000 and ending at 1600. He was accompanied by the Clerk until 1300.

Mr. Smith gave his report on topics discussed as follows.

Broadband

The Government is keen to see a second-generation broadband rolled out across the country. Fibre optic is the system of choice but most will remain with copper connections for the foreseeable future. As a compromise Fibre optic cabling from exchanges to your nearest 'green box' connection point should be completed in Watton-at-Stone by 2015.

Mr. Smith suggested that getting the Community hall online might increase its appeal and open the way for further development (e.g. Internet Cafe)

Big Society and Localism

As this is rolled out it should be possible for local councils to take on more responsibility for local services. The extent to which this affects Parish Councils and other neighbourhood groups will be down to them. In Mr. Smith's view, the Parish Councils would see little change where higher authorities are providing reasonable services. Even if we did decide to take control of our own services, these would have to dovetail into East Herts Council's current systems.

Funding

Local authority funding is on the change to the extent that business rates, currently collected by District Councils, will be kept by them (in part) to fund local services.

The New Homes Bonus initiative proposed by central government may be seen as a sweetener in the push for more house building. Officially, it is to help local administrations to provide for increased demand on their social provisions. The sum proposed is the equivalent to band D rates paid for six years. It is divided

between in our case, Hertfordshire County Council, East Herts Council and Watton-at-Stone Parish Council. Exact details are to follow but it should be significant for Watton-at-Stone.

Other funding is getting tighter. East Herts Council sets aside £500,000 each year for larger match funding and smaller projects.

‘Support 4 Community Projects’ is a commercial company, which identifies funding sources and helps with applications. .

The Eastern Plateau Region Rural Business Development fund has an estimated one million to distribute. It funds small rural business in rural areas.

Planning

As you are well aware the National Planning Policy Framework is being drafted. 52 pages will replace over 1000 pages. It will be by definition overarching and it will be down to East Herts Council to have its LDF (Local Development Framework) in place to provide the detail for the district. Sustainability is the overriding requirement.

Village Planning

The LDF will allocate housing requirements to villages. It will not be possible to reduce the requirement with our own plan, we may be able to modify it minimally or increase it. It is estimated that it will cost between £17,000 and £63,000 to produce an acceptable village plan and Mr. Smith got the feeling that we were not being encouraged.

Also:

Datchworth has become the first ‘Fair Trade’ village in Hertfordshire encouraging people and businesses to support it.

Aston hosted the Virgin Isles Olympic team in readiness for next years Olympics

The Olympic Torch will not ‘overnight’ in Hertfordshire. Its mandate is not to be more than one hours travel away by public transport from anyone in the UK.

The Olympics ‘‘ Inspired Facilities Program ‘‘ was highlighted in its provision of sport related grants.

b) Queen’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations - meeting and flyer

Mr. Knight said that because a date for the meeting to discuss the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations in the village was not arranged, the flier was not produced.

Mr. Knight said that currently the Pavilion room at the Community Hall is booked up every Monday to Thursday evening during term times. However, during half-term Watton Youth drop Inn will not be using the facilities on a Wednesday 26th October and he had therefore preliminarily booked this date for the Jubilee celebrations meeting. Parish Councillors present agreed this meeting date.

Mr. Knight to arrange for the printing of the flier, which will be produced on an A5 sheet in black and white. The estimated cost will be between £40-£50.

Mr. Smith, Mr. Meischke and Mr. Poulton to co-ordinator the meeting.

Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke/N. Poulton

c) East Herts Council Community and Public Engagement Calendar

All Parish Councillors were sent the following e-mail dated 9th September.

‘We have recently created a Community and Public Engagement Calendar at East Herts Council <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=24122> and are very keen to populate it with as much information as we can. The calendar will show community group meetings, resident groups, parish and town council meetings, housing association and policing forums, etc.

The events template is attached above and I would be grateful if you could complete and forward details to myself of any community and/or public meetings happening within the parish and these can be included within the calendar.’

Parish Councillors agreed that the monthly Parish Council meeting dates should be uploaded to this calendar and any other events that are appropriate.

Action: J. Allsop

d) Localism and planning

Refer to item 7 a, Specific items - Report on East Herts Rural Parish Conference held on 15th September.

e) E-mails and circulation

Some Parish Councillors have commented that too many e-mails are being circulated by the Clerk.

Parish Councillors discussed the option of one Parish Councillor being responsible for vetting all e-mails prior to circulation. After discussion, it was agreed not to do this and to continue with the current method.

f) Salt bins in the village

Refer to item 8 b ii, Routine reports - Monthly village-report – Salt bins.

g) Sportsfield hedge cut

Nick Whitehead to be asked to cut the sportsfield hedge as soon as possible.

Action: J. Allsop

h) Report on Oak tree on sportsfield

Richard Wilson of C'Trees, has arranged for a Picus Sonic Tomography survey to be carried out on the Oak tree on the sportsfield and has submitted his report, which has been e-mailed to all Parish Councillors.

The report shows evidence of significant wood decay caused by the decaying fungi *Ganoderma adspersum* and *Fistulina Hepatica*. In time, wood or roots affected by these organisms will lose their ability to bear the weight of the tree and withstand wind loading. Tree failure is therefore a foreseeable outcome in the long term. Richard Wilson's recommendations for the Oak tree are as follows.

- 'Oak wood is strong and decay resistant. The tree may continue to stand and provide great amenity and habitat for several decades.
- Risks should be managed and the tree monitored on an on-going basis.
- Specific actions include:
 1. Crown reduce by 30%
 2. Remove damaged limbs.
 3. Develop & implement a target management strategy.
 4. Annual re-inspection.
 5. Bi-annual sonic tomography re-inspection.
- T1 is subject to a tree preservation order and permission to conduct the recommended works must be sought from East Herts. District Council.'

Mr. Wilson states that items 1, 2 and 3 should be carried-out within three months and the public should be informed via the Parish News and notices in the village.

A copy of this report to be sent to Malcolm Amey (East Herts Council) asking for his comments.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Harris agreed to draft a letter to the St. Albans Diocesan Board and after approval from Mr. Smith, the following letter was sent on 29th September.

'As you will be aware under the lease from the Diocesan Board to the Parish Council it covenants, under Clause 2 (iii),

"to maintain and keep properly cut topped trimmed and preserved and maintained and replace any trees that might die"

The Lease is due to expire by effluxion of time at the end of this month but we anticipate that the Diocesan Board will be prepared to grant a new lease. The Parish Council wishes to be granted a new lease.

As part of the Parish Council's responsibility for tree maintenance we have just had completed a survey on the English Oak tree. We asked that this be undertaken because of concerns as to the state and condition of the tree.

The survey report, a copy of which we enclose, makes recommendations in section 4 as to the maintenance and upkeep of the tree.

Compliance with these recommendations, as to which realistically the Parish Council has no alternative, will incur it in ongoing costs.

In the first instance, we will need to consult with East Herts to secure approval of the work recommended and thereafter obtain competitive quotes for the initial work.

The purpose of this letter is:

1. to secure in principle agreement of the Diocesan Board to the renewal of the lease on substantially the same terms as the one about to expire. You will appreciate that the Parish Council would not wish to engage in a maintenance programme with continuing costs if it did not have any continuing liability under a new lease

and

2. to invite the Diocesan Board to agree in principle to make a contribution to the cost of maintenance and upkeep of this important tree. As yet we do not have an accurate indication of costs but the survey fee alone was £408.

We hope we have clearly set out the issues and look forward to hearing from you.'

i) Antisocial behaviour in the park/woods behind Great Innings

Ms. Waltham asked for this item to be put on the Parish Council agenda because there were quite a lot of problems in the woods at Great Innings over the summer holidays. During the daytime there were various groups of teenagers and at night adults in their early twenties were congregating and drinking. These problems have now been resolved.

East Herts Council, the landowners, were made aware of the situation and the police made site visits during August.

Parish Councillors agreed that members of the public need to be encouraged to contact the police by calling 101, the non-emergency number.

j) Request for gates to be added to the play park on Great Innings

Ms. Waltham asked for this item to be put on the Parish Council agenda.

She said that the Great Innings Play area is enclosed and has two un-gated entrances, with cattle-type grills to stop dogs and other animals entering the area. However, the grills do not stop small children exiting.

Recently, there have been a few incidents where dogs have been tied to the external railings and a child has come out of the play area unattended and been bitten by a dog. Ms. Waltham said that Mr. Poulton had informed her that the Parish Council had requested gates on the play area on more than one occasion but East Herts Council had refused because the grills are in place.

Ms. Waltham to draft a letter to East Herts Council requesting gated entrances to the Great Innings Play area and explaining the problem outlined above and that the gates are to prevent small children exiting the play area and not the dogs getting in.

Action: E. Waltham

Parish Council e-mail disclaimer

The Clerk to e-mail all Parish Councillors the Parish Council e-mail disclaimer, which must be used by all Parish Councillors every time they send out e-mails on behalf of the Parish Council or Community Hall.

Action: J. Allsop

8 Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

Mr. Filer reported on the following items.

• **Monthly accounts**

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council			
Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty cash - Payments	
None		None	
Cheques issued			
Wages and salaries	August and September 2011		2102.50
Frank Cooper and son	Grass cutting 1st, 8th, 15 & 28th July		230.40
Blue Bury Contractors	supply and fit hand rail		96.00
Adam Welch	repair Lammas steps, weed kill around War Memorial		110.00
Frank Cooper and son	Grass cutting 5th, 11th, 19th, 26th August		230.40
Adam Welch	remove fallen limb and hanging limb from Lammas Willow		190.00
Fred Burnell	Destroy one wasps nest by swings on sportsfield		42.00
			<u>3001.30</u>
Cheques received			
Jackie Roberts	Allotment rent 2010/11		5.00
Sports and Social Club	1/4 rent		331.25
Mr. J. Knight	Allotment rent 2011/12		66.00
Sarah Dance	Allotment rent 2011/12		16.50
Marion Blacktin & Pam Dean	Allotment rent 2011/12		16.50
Cheryl Gibbings	Allotment rent 2011/12		33.00
Jackie Roberts	Allotment rent 2011/12		16.50
Tony Morris	Allotment rent 2011/12		16.50
Linda Aldridge	Allotment rent 2011/12		33.00
Carla Stewart	Allotment rent 2011/12		16.50
John Love	Allotment rent 2011/12		82.50
Phil Moore	Allotment rent 2011/12		33.00
Helen McCash	Allotment rent 2011/12		16.50
			<u>682.75</u>
Watton-at-Stone Community Hall			
Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
Jim Keen – Main Hall	160.00	VAT return for 06/11	24.03
Barbara Smart – Pavilion	96.00	Argos – kettle	14.99
Oasis – Pavilion	49.00	Travis Perkins – sugar soap and wipes	13.82
Sandra Smith – Meeting room	.00	VAT return for 07/11	<u>24.33</u>
Youth club members	63.00		<u>77.17</u>
Sarah Campbell - Main Hall & Pavilion	32.00		
Craft club – Meeting room	15.00		
Knit and natter – Meeting room	40.00		

Sharon Ling –Pavilion		<u>144.00</u>	
		<u>599.00</u>	
Cheques issued			
Wages	August and September 2011		910.55
D P Electrics Ltd	PAT testing and Emergency lightings tests		78.00
Nigel Poulton	Materials for use by Glaxo volunteers		142.96
Hertfordshire County Council	Cleaning materials		68.88
D. P Electrics	Replace broken lights and fixings		85.20
			<u>1285.59</u>
Cheques received			
Sports and Social Club	1/4 rent		331.25
Wakefield	Main Hall and Pavilion hire		65.00
Nigel Poulton - ref cheque 800463	refund on return of paint purchased from B&Q		41.98
Watton Youth Drop Inn	Main Hall and Pavilion hire		214.20
Dave Boddy	Main Hall and Pavilion hire		275.00
			<u>927.43</u>

Mr. Filer said that these are two months of accounts because a full Parish Council meeting was not held in August.

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

• **Santander bank signatories**

The Clerk said that additional signatories are required to provide proof of identify in the form of a passport or driving licence plus two utility bills. These need to be taken to Santander in Ware.

Currently there are five Parish Councillors and the Clerk who can sign on the Parish Council and Community Hall banks accounts.

The five Parish Councillors who do not have signing authority are Mr. Smith, Mr. Harris, Mrs. McCash, Mr. Stock and Ms. Waltham.

Mr. Harris, Mr. Stock and Ms. Waltham said that they were not bothered if they were bank signatories or not. Mr. Meischke proposed that only Mr. Smith, as Chairman of the Parish Council, is added as an additional bank signatory. Mr. Knight seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: M. Smith/ J. Allsop

• **Request for budget items for the year 2012/13**

Mr. Filer asked all Parish Councillors to e-mail him any items they would like included in the 2011/12 budget, as soon as possible.

Action: Parish Councillors

• **Obtain quotations for works to be carried out in 2011/12**

The Clerk to obtain quotations for the following work

- Grass cutting for the sportsfield
- Grass cutting for the Lammas and Watton Green
- Sportsfield hedge cutting

Action: J. Allsop

Adam Welch's three-year contract for grass cutting, mowing and leaf clearance work ends on 31st March 2012.

Mrs. Dinnin to arrange for quotations to be obtained from at least three contractors, including Adam Welch, for the following works.

- Strimming and mowing work, High Street flowerbed maintenance (including the Memorial garden).
- Leaf clearance.

Action: C. Dinnin

Community Hall Trustees

In the absence of Mr. Poulton, Mr. Meischke reported on the following item.

• **External woodwork**

The external woodwork at the Community Hall needs painting with Sadolin. In addition, some repair work is required to some of the woodwork. This item to be included in the 2012/13 budget.

Mr. Meischke to obtain quotations from Brian Bunyan, Bob Adams and Adrian Thompson

Action: J. Meischke

• **PAT and Emergency Light inspection**

D. P Electrics carried-out the annual emergency lighting inspection at the Community Hall and PAT testing on all the movable items in the Community Hall, as well as the office equipment at the Clerk's home.

• **Glaxo volunteers work in the Community Hall and sportsfield**

The Glaxo volunteers have painted the swings on the sportsfield and the walls of the Main entrance corridor at the Community Hall and the Pavilion doors. They will paint the remaining doors on Monday 26th September.

- **Conflicts between users of the Community Hall facilities**

The Clerk received a verbal complaint from Jim Keen about the language footballers use when they are at the Community Hall on Tuesday evenings during football practise.

It was agreed that if another complaint is received from Jim Keen, Mr. Knight to notify the Sports and Social Club of the problem so that they can speak the footballers about the use of bad language.

Note: Mr. Knight will not be required to carry-out any action on this subject because Mr. Smith confirmed that Tuesday football practise will no longer be held at the Community Hall.

Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following item.

- **MPPA – Wash and Moss Kill**

Mr. Knight said that the 2011/12 budget includes a provision for moss killing and pressure washing the MPPA. He said that most of the surface was in good condition. However, there are sections about a meter wide on the shady sides of both tennis courts that have moss growing on them and are therefore slippery. The cost of the work (excluding VAT) is £580 for pressure washing both tennis courts and £110 for moss kill on one court equivalent.

Mr. Filer proposed that Halycon Courts to pressure wash the MPPA as soon as possible, but only apply moss kill (one court equivalent) to the back (church-side) and edge (Church Walk/ Allotments side) of the courts only. Mr. Meischke seconded the motion and all present were in favour. **Action: I. Knight**

Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Lammas Steps**

This item was discussed under 5, b, 7 Review of actions - Contact CMS re wooden pegs required for steps on the Lammas Bank.

- **Allotments**

The new tenancy agreements and invoices for plot rental and water charges were sent to all allotment holders by 9th September. All but three of these were hand-delivered by Mrs. Dinnin and the Clerk.

- **Volunteer Days by Glaxo**

Mrs. Dinnin said that the GSK (GlaxoSmithKline) volunteers have done some excellent work throughout the village on all the Mondays in September. The jobs include work at the Methodist Church, painting the village benches, the swings on the sportsfield and the Community Hall corridor. Tidying up the War Memorial garden and numerous other jobs throughout the village.

It was agreed to write a letter of thanks to all the GSK teams and place a notice in the Parish News.

Action: C. Dinnin/J. Allsop

- **P3 agreement**

Mrs. Dinnin said that that we have now received the P3 (Parish Paths Partnership) annual agreement form. The P3 grants now comes under Groundwork Hertfordshire. She reminded Parish Councillors that under the new agreement, no claims can be submitted for grass cutting works in the village.

However, the work done by CMS to the handrail on footpath 11 will be included and we may be able to claim for items such as the cutting back and repairing of the Lammas bank steps. Applications need to be submitted to Groundwork Hertfordshire before 30th November.

Mrs. Dinnin to find out if layering of the sportsfield hedge along its boundary with School Lane can be included in the annual grant. **Action: C. Dinnin**

The Parish Council had put a £1,000 under income for the P3 grant, but will no longer be receiving this amount.

Tree planting in another item that the Parish Council could include in their P3 grant.

All Parish Councillors to be e-mailed a copy of Groundwork Hertfordshire's e-mail outlining the terms and conditions for applying for the 2012/13 P3 grants. **Action: J. Allsop**

Mrs. Dinnin said that Adam Welch informed her that two large branches on one of the willow trees on the Lammas came down on Friday 16th September. As Adam Welch was due to go away on a three week holiday, his quotation of his £190 was accepted and he was instructed to do the work before he went away. Mrs. Dinnin said she obtained the necessary approval from two Parish Councillors before accepting the quotation

Mrs. Dinnin suggested that the Environment Sub-Committee members arrange a site meetings on the Lammas, Watton Green and the sportsfield to survey the trees in their ownership and decide if any additional trees need planting. This was agreed. Mrs. Dinnin to arrange a meeting date and ask Tony Bradford (CMS and villager) if he is able to attend the meeting as an independent.

Action: C. Dinnin

The Environment Sub-Committee members also to inspect the War Memorial Garden and agree a planting or maintenance programme.
Action: Environment Sub-Committee

b) Routine reports

i) Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests

Mr. Meischke to carry-out the emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests after this meeting.

Note: Because the hall was in use, Mr. Meischke was unable to do this test after the meeting ended.

ii) Monthly village-report

Mr. Smith completed the report on 19th September.

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

- **Turf in goal mouth** – Mr. Smith said that the turfing of the goal mouths appear to have been a success and this area is looking good..
- **Swings** – These look in good condition now that they have been painted but the GSK (Glaxo Smith Kline) volunteers.
- **Two external lights out** - Mr. Meischke to arrange for replacement bulbs to be fitted.
Action: J. Meischke
- **External lighting timers** – Mr. Meischke has corrected all the external lighting timers.
- **Salt bins** – The Clerk to e-mail Eralp Yucelt (Hertfordshire Highways) asking him to fill the salt bins before the cold weather.
Action: J. Allsop

iii) Weekly sportsfield-report and action

None.

iv) Website

- **History entry** - Mr. Stock said that he had sent a letter of thanks to Vernon Dunhill for the writing the history entry for the Watton-at-Stone website.
- **Website entry request** - A request has been received for a commercial entry on the website. Mr. Stock reminded Parish Councillors that we have previously agreed not to include commercial entries. This was agreed by all Parish Councillors.
- **River Beane** - Mr. Knight said that in the village of Watton-at-Stone description there is no mention of the River Beane. The only mention of the river is under Open spaces and Walks – Common Land – the Lammas.
 Mr. Knight said that the River Beane is sufficiently important to be entered in the main description, because without it Watton-at-Stone might not exist.
 Mr. Knight said he had written some draft text and agreed to e-mail it to Mr. Stock for his comments.
Action: I. Knight
- **Website banner** - The Clerk asked when the Parish Council would be producing a proper banner for the website.
 Mr. Meischke agreed to speak to his son Jono Meischke, who is a graphics designer.
Action: J. Meischke

v) Website diary

None.

9 Correspondence received

a) Hertfordshire Highways - Temporary Closing of roads in Watton-at-Stone and Whempstead

All Parish Councillors have been e-mailed with the temporary closure notices sent out by Hertfordshire Highways for the following areas.

- **Rivershill** - sometime during the period 17th October 2011 and 21st February 2012.
- **Whempstead Road, Whempstead** - sometime during the period 16 October 2011 and 15 April 2013.
- **High Street And Moorymead Close** - sometime during the period 3 October 2011 and 2 April 2013
 1. that length of High Street, Watton at Stone from its junction with the A602 Watton at Stone Bypass/A602 Hooks Cross roundabout south eastwards to its junction with Ware Road, a distance of approximately 1800 metres.
 2. that length of Moorymead Close, Watton at Stone from its junction with Station Road north westwards for its entire length.

Mr. Knight has arranged for a notice to be placed in the October issue of the Parish News.

The Clerk to put up Notices and maps on all the Parish Council notices boards as soon as possible.

Action: J. Allsop

b) The National Planning Policy Framework

Mr. Smith said that although recent e-mails from the Journal of Local Planning look on first inspection to be very useful, they do charge for their services. Parish Councillors agreed not to subscribe to the Journal for Local Planning.

c) Oliver Heald re BT Superfast Broadband

The following e-mail was received from Oliver Heald on 14th September.

‘I recently met senior officials from BT, who tell me that Parish Councils have an opportunity to liaise with the County Council over funding for Superfast Broadband in their area. BT is happy to discuss this with Parish Councils and I wondered if you have liaised with the County Council about this issue? I understand the lead official is the Chief Executive, Caroline Tapster. My contact at British Telecom is their Head of Parliamentary Affairs, clova.fyfe@bt.com, telephone (020) 7356 5352.’

Refer to item 7 a, Specific items - Report on Inter-Parish conference held on 15th September – Broadband.

d) Letter from Hannah Brownlow re play equipment

Mr. Smith read out the following letter from Hannah Brownlow (92 Hazeldell).

‘I am writing to the Parish Council to express an interest in forming a fund-raising group to raise money for new play equipment for the meadow at Watton-at-Stone.

As a mum of two young children, I know that the existing play area is very well used, both in the day and after school. It is also a lovely situation, with the cricket field and view of the church. However, it is felt that the play equipment could be improved, especially with the size of the village expanding.

I believe there are a group of 15-20 parents who have expressed an interest in fundraising to improve play facilities and I would be willing to be the main point of contact.

I would be interested to know if this is something the Parish Council would give permission for and, if possible, give support to.’

After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed to write to Hannah Brownlow stating that in principle, the Parish Council is happy to give its support to her proposal but Parish Councillors consider there are a number of issues that need to be resolved before matters can proceed.

Mr. Harris agreed to draft a letter to Hannah Brownlow, for approval by Parish Councillors via e-mail.

Action: I. Harris

Note: the following letter was sent to Hannah Brownlow on 27th September.

‘Fundraising for additional playground equipment

Your letter of 17th September was considered at the Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 20th September and I am now writing on its behalf to set out the issues discussed.

The councillors were pleased to read of your interest in forming a fund raising group to raise money for new play equipment for the meadow (which the Parish Council takes to refer to the sports field) in the village.

In principle the Parish Council is happy to give its support to your proposal but, without as it were wishing to damn it with faint praise, the councillors considered that there are a number of issues that need to be resolved before matters can proceed.

I have been asked to set them out as follows:

1. The Parish Council would like to have full details of what additional equipment is proposed and where this is to be sited.
2. An estimate of cost is needed, both as regards equipment purchase and installation.
3. All purchase and installation costs would have to be met from funds that you are able to raise. You would need to have some contingent plans in the event that you were not able to raise sufficient funds, to include a return of any monies raised.
4. It would need to be clearly agreed that any equipment that was bought and added to the site would become the property of the Parish Council.
5. The Parish Council would take legal responsibility for its upkeep and maintenance, for which it would budget each year. Given the tight financial constraints within which the Parish Council operates, you will understand that the fact that it will meet this liability is one of the reasons the level of information herein is being sought.

I know you will understand the need to be clear on all these matters, together with any more that arise during ongoing discussions, before you embark on any fundraising.

If you think it would be helpful to meet this is something the Parish Council considers would be appropriate and they are willing to establish a small sub committee to take the matter forward.

I am sorry for the somewhat formal nature of this response but the Parish Council is a public body exercising a public function and its processes must be transparent.'

e) Naming of the roads on the new Station Road development

Mr. Smith read out the following e-mail from Pam Archer (Land Charges Manager/LLPG Custodian/SNN Officer at East Herts Council) received on 15th September.

'I have been contacted by Barratt Homes regarding a development off Station Road in Watton at Stone. Attached is a plan showing the development which requires 4 new road names. The developer is quite happy for the Parish Council to suggest some names, and I would therefore be grateful if you could put it to the Councillors at their next meeting. If the meeting is not for sometime, I would be grateful if you could contact the Councillors for their views as the developer is pushing me to get the matter progressed and I really need the road names within the next 10 days.'

After discussion, the following road names were agreed for the following reasons.

Road 1: Clappers Lane - this is the old local name for the small section of road that runs on the other side of the railway line, but is actually named Church Lane.

Road 2: Stoney Fields - the historical field name for the site on which the new development is being built is Lower Stoney Field.

Road 3: Gatekeeper - the pupils at Watton-at-Stone had a competition and decided on this name for the new development.

Road 4: Gresley Close - Sir Nigel Gresley, one of Britain's most famous steam locomotive engineers, lived in Watton-at-Stone in the early to mid 1900s.

The Clerk to notify Pam Archer, East Herts Council, accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

f) Annual Playground inspection

This item to be placed on the agenda for the October Trustees meeting.

Agenda: Trustees 10/2011

g) Glebe Court Coffee morning

Mr. Smith said that Parish Councillors are invited to attend a Glebe Court coffee morning on Friday 30th September between 1000 and 1200.

10 Village organisations

- **Watton Youth Drop Inn:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone School Governors:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Watch:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association**
Mrs. Dinnin said that the Horticultural Show held on 4th September was a great success. The show has not been run for many years and was resurrected by the Allotment and Garden Association.
Mike Freeman (Chairman of the Allotment and Garden Association) opened the show which had 128 entries. Mrs. Dinnin said she presented the prizes to the winners and a very good afternoon was had by all.
- **Watton-at-Stone War Memorial Hall Management Committee:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Pre-School Playgroup**
Mrs. Dinnin said that the Pre-School Playgroup will hold its AGM on Wednesday 28th September.
- **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**
Mr. Knight said that the River Beane Restoration Association continue to be active. They are currently embarking on a programme of setting up river wardens, which will be a group of people who will look after designated stretches of the River Beane from the upper reaches through to Hertford. A similar scheme is already operating for the River Ver.

11 Items for Parish News

There was one item identified for inclusion in the October 2011 issue of the Parish News.

- Glaxo volunteers.

Action: J. Allsop

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

Action: I. Knight

- **The meeting closed at 2108.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 18th October 2011.**