

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 13th December 2011

Present:	Mr. Michael Smith (Chairman)	Mr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman)
	Mrs. Christine Dinnin	Mr. Denis Filer (left at 2002)
	Mr. Iain Harris	Mr. Ian Knight
	Mr. Nigel Poulton	Mr. David Stock
	Ms. Emma Waltham	The Clerk (Mrs. Jane Allsop)
Public:	County Councillor Bryan Hammond (left at 1945)	

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence from Mrs. Helen McCash.

2 Public Participation

None

3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

Mr. Smith said that Mr. Filer will be giving his report on the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee following item 5, Report by Bryan Hammond on the future of Hertfordshire Highways Locality Budget Scheme.

4 Declaration of Interests

None.

5 Report by Bryan Hammond on the future of Hertfordshire Highways Locality Budget Scheme

Mr. Smith welcomed County Councillor Bryan Hammond to the meeting.

Bryan Hammond explained that each Hertfordshire County Councillor has an anticipated £90,000 to use for Highways maintenance schemes during the year April 2012 to March 2013, although, this budget will not be confirmed until February 2012. This is the first year that most Hertfordshire County districts/boroughs will have this funding, although it was tested in Decorum and Broxbourne this year (2011/12).

The local Highways Manager gives a list of likely schemes/priorities to the County Councillor, who then has to decide which are to be actioned, although they can introduce alternatives themselves if they wish.

The initial £65,000 is to be spent on 'Capital' items (e.g. road resurfacing). These need to be submitted by the end of November 2011. The £25,000 balance is to be spent on Revenue items, e.g. routine maintenance.

Bryan Hammond said that he had already selected the top three items prioritised by his Highways manager, which include two schemes for Watton-at-Stone and one for Tewin. The Watton-at-Stone items are.

- High Street - entire section carriageway repairs.
- Rivershill - entire section carriageway surface dressing.

He said out the 14 Parish Councils in his area only two responded to his e-mail concerning the locality budgets. Tewin said they were pleased to be on the list of repair works and Watton-at-Stone invited him to attend a Parish Council meeting.

Mr. Poulton explained that the High Street and Rivershill repair works would not normally be included in the Highways budget, although the work would eventually have been done.

Bryan Hammond said that what the County Council is trying to do is follow the localism projects, which is why they contacted the Parishes asking for their views by 1st December. He said he was sorry that he had been unable to attend the November Parish Council meeting as originally planned.

It is anticipated that the highways work in Watton-at-Stone and Tewin will be completed by September 2012. Mr. Poulton said that the lead in time is between three and four months. However, the lead-time for a pelican crossing can take about two years.

10 a CDA for Hertfordshire - Help With The Digital Switchover

CDA for Herts, in conjunction with the BBC, are raising awareness of the Digital Switchover due on 18th April 2012. On this date, analogue televisions will no longer work. Most people are aware of the Digital Switchover however approximately 5% of the population do not realise that it is about to happen.

Parish Councillors suggested that an article about the Digital Switchover could be included in the February issue of the Parish News.

Bryan Hammond suggested that the Clerk contact Kath Sexton (CDA for Herts) requesting a press release.

Action: J. Allsop

9 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee

• **Monthly Accounts**

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council		
Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty cash - Payments
None		None
Cheques issued		
BSWW Parish News	printing and delivery of Village Directory	37.50
J. Allsop for Fast host	Two website domain names	16.56
J. Allsop	Office Etc Limited – Computer mouse	25.90
Wages and salaries	December 2011	1045.35
Post Office	Tax and NI for April, May, June 2011	<u>276.12</u>
		<u>1401.43</u>
Cheques received		
Sports and Social Club	1/4 rent	331.25
		<u>331.25</u>
Watton-at-Stone Community Hall		
Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments
Barbara Smart - hall hire	24.00	14.83
Sharon Ling - hall hire	24.00	<u>14.83</u>
Floodlighting to 15.11.11	145.00	
Jim Keen – October hall hire	60.00	
Alex Probert - hall hire	40.00	
Paula Cross - hall hire	37.00	
Katherine Wills - hall hire	40.00	
	<u>370.00</u>	
Cheques issued		
H. B. Thompson	25 hrs cleaning x 7.65p	191.25
Hertfordshire County Council	Cleaning materials	42.00
BSWW Parish News	Advert in Parish News	100.00
Wages and salaries	December 2011	321.30
		<u>654.55</u>
Cheques received		
Sports and Social Club	1/4 rent	331.25
Mrs. Mothersdale	Main Hall and Pavilion	45.50
		<u>376.75</u>

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

• **Approval of minutes of Budget and Finance Sub-Committee meeting held on 6th December 2011**

Mr. Stock proposed that the minutes of the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee meeting be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record. Mr. Meischke seconded the motion and all present at that meeting were in favour.

• **Community Hall Hire charges**

Mrs. Dinnin proposed that the Community Hall hire-charges should remain the same gross amount (i.e. gross including VAT regardless of the percentage rate). Mr. Harris seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

• **The Sports and Social Club hire-charge**

Mr. Smith proposed that the Sports and Social Club hire-charge be increased from £2,650 to £2,700 per annum. Mrs. Dinnin seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to write to the Sports and Social Club accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

• **Allotment rents**

Mr. Meischke proposed that the allotment rent remains the same.

Namely: Rent at £20 per full allotment and £10 for one half of an allotment.

Water Charges at £13 per full allotment and £6.50 for one half.

Mrs. Dinnin seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

• **Various quotations**

Mrs. Dinnin proposed that the following quotations be accepted.

• **Frank Cooper and Son Limited's** quotation of £51per cut (plus VAT), to gang-mow the sportsfield grass be accepted.

• **Ted Brown's** verbal quotations of £70 and £30 per cut for strimming and mowing works and £60 for pruning the Community Hall garden once a year be accepted.

- **Nick Whitehead's** verbal quotation of £350 (plus VAT) for sportsfield hedge cutting be accepted.
- **Blue Bury Contractors** quotation of £1,100 plus VAT for grass cutting work on the Lammas and Watton Green be accepted.
- **Greenwood Tree Care** (Adam Welch) quotation for a three-year contract at £2,700 per annum be accepted.
- **Robert Adams** quotation of £210 (excluding materials) for decorating the kitchen and £480 for staining and repairing the Pavilion and Main entrance external woodwork at the Community Hall be accepted.

Mrs. Dinnin seconded the recommendations and all present were in favour.

The Clerk to write to all contractors accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Employees and self-employed remuneration**

This item was discussed under 'Exclusion of the Public and Press' and the meeting was closed to the public.

- **Budget 2012/13**

Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors were given a copy of the draft budget-figures for 2012/2013.

Mr. Filer said that he and the Clerk had reviewed each item and compared the figures with those already spent this year and in previous years. A similar process was then repeated at the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee meeting held on the 6th December and alterations made where necessary.

For the benefit of Mr. Harris and Mr. Knight, who were not present at the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee meeting on 6th December, Mr. Filer went through each item in the budget.

Mr. Filer said he wanted to look at the 9-month statement of accounts for the Parish Council and

Community Hall before approving the budget at the January 2012 Parish Council meeting. **Agenda: 01/12**

- **Precept 2012/13**

The Precept for 2012/13 will be agreed at the January 2012 Parish Council meeting.

Agenda: 01/12

- **Community Hall advert in the Parish News**

BSWW Parish news have submitted their invoice of £100, which is the 2011 annual charge for the Council Community Hall advert. Mr. Smith proposed that the invoice be paid, Mrs. Dinnin seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: J. Allsop

- **SLCC Annual membership**

The SLCC membership renewal is £123. The membership provides the Parish Council with legal advice and useful information about changes in legislation, e.g. changes in accounting practices. Although this information is also available from the Hertfordshire Association of Local Councils, their annual membership fee would be in the region of a thousand pounds.

Mr. Filer proposed that the SLCC membership is renewed. Mrs. Dinnin seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Action: J. Allsop

Parish Councillors agreed that it was not necessary to record approved items as proposed and seconded. Therefore, from January 2012 onwards, minutes records will only include the acceptance of the Parish Council or Community Hall Trustees.

6 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 15th November 2011**

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

- Page 8, Item 8 b iv, Reports - 6-monthly check of MPPA, Play Area on sportsfield and Community Hall equipment – Benches

After the following text

- **Walkern Road** – The Bob Ansell Memorial bench is in a poor state and needs replacing.

The Ansell family to be notified and asked if they wish to replace the seat or have it removed.

Action: J. Allsop

Add bullet

- **'High Street near Mill Lane** – Needs painting.'

Mrs. Dinnin proposed that the minutes as amended 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

1. Sort out the locks and signage for the outside toilets

A stainless steel Ladies and Gents toilet sign has been purchased.

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke will sort out the locks and signage for the external toilets before the beginning of February 2012. As agreed at the November Parish Council meeting, the Ladies toilets, which has two cubicles, will become a unisex facility and the Gents toilet will remain locked, with a view to changing it into a storage room in the future.

Action: N. Poulton/J. Meischke

A notice of the change of use of the toilet facilities to be placed in the February issue of the Parish News.

Action: J. Allsop

2. Ask Ted Brown to paint the three benches, the planter and the Information Board on the Lammas

This action point to be deferred to the May 2012 Parish Council meeting.

Agenda: 05/12

c) Action points outstanding for more than two months

1. Update Standing Orders document and e-mail to all Parish Councillors

A copy of the new Standing Orders, with amendments made by Mr. Poulton, has completed circulation. Parish Councillors have made further comments/revisions to these Standing orders.

The following was agreed.

- Not to pursue the suggestion of proxy voting. Mr. Harris said he thought that this might not be lawful;
- To include in the Standing Orders the advertising of tenders such as the Parish Council think appropriate;
- Authorisation of small payments, which require two persons (one being the Chairman or Vice-Chairman and the other being a member of the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee) to be increased from £100 to £250.

The Clerk to type up the New Standing orders as amended and e-mail it to all Parish Councillors prior to the March 2012 Parish Council meeting.

Action: J. Allsop

d) Action points resolved

1. Type up letter to Chief Inspector Jon Speed

Mr. Poulton said that Dr. Norden (10 School Lane) had a note put through their door by the Police sometime between the 29th and 30th November informing him that a crime had taken place in his area. However when Dr. Norden visited Stevenage Police Station to find out what the incident was, they refused to tell him because of the Freedom of Information Act. The Parish Council agreed that they should also have been told of this incident because the Community Hall is close to Dr. Norden's property.

Mr. Harris said that having read the November minutes, it is evident that the parking problems outside 130 High Street were substantially caused by the police. Parish Councillors discussed if we should take this matter further with the police and it was agreed not to do so at the present time.

2. Write to East Herts Council re planning application for 3 White House Close
3. Write to East Herts Council re planning application for Ballacraigne, Walkern Road
4. Write to East Herts Council re planning application for 7, Beane Road
5. Write to East Herts Council re planning application 46 Great Innings North
6. Respond to website banner interested parties
7. Send the Clerk modifications to the village directory
8. Contact all organisations listed in the Village Directory to check their details are correct
9. Arrange for Village Directory to be printed
10. Arrange for Village Directory to be inserted in Parish News
11. E-mail all Parish Councillors the draft budget figures for 2012/13
12. Accept Adam Welch's quote for tree work to tree on the Lammas and on the sportsfield
13. Arrange a date for the next Environment Sub-Committee meeting
14. Contact City Roofing Contractors re Community Hall guttering
15. Inform Cricket Club about guttering and graffiti on cricket shed
16. Contact City Roofing about high level guttering at the Community Hall
17. Contact the Ansell family re memorial bench in Walkern Road
18. Renew domain names for website
19. Contact East Herts Council re Village Hall Network Meeting
20. Write Parish News article

7 Planning

Mr. Smith said that the Clerk now records planning applications on the computer and not hand written in a book. It was agreed to upload a copy of this file to the Watton-at-Stone website. **Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Harris said that a copy of the planning protocol should be included in the uploaded file. This was agreed. **Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Harris proposed that Mr. Stock become deputy planning co-ordinator. Mr. Smith seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

a) Applications

None.

b) Decisions

i) Ballacraine, Walkern Road (3/11/1457/FP)

Demolition of existing building and erection of a single storey dwelling and associated garage
-East Herts Council permission refused

iii) 7, Beane Road (3/11/1878/FP)

Erection of two storey side extension and single storey rear extension -East Herts Council permission granted

Mr. Harris said that it is interesting to note that the Parish Council's comments on both these planning applications was totally ignored by the East Herts Council planning officers.

c) Appeals

i) 99 High Street (APP/J1915/A/11/216416)

New dwelling with part formed of conversion of existing stable with attached existing garage and parking
No action required by the Parish Council.

ii) 99 High street (APP/J1915/E/11/2165435) - Listed building consent

New dwelling with part formed of conversion of existing stable with attached existing garage and parking
No action required by the Parish Council.

8 Specific items

a) Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations - meeting held on 23rd November 2012

Mr. Knight has produced a set of minutes for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebration meeting held on 23rd November, which was chaired by Mr. Meischke. A copy of these minutes has been e-mailed to all Parish Councillors. The next meeting will be held on 9th January 2012 in the Community Hall.

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations will include a village picnic on the sportsfield on the Sunday afternoon of 3rd June 2012.

The Parish Council will organise the music and entertainment for the event including building a stage and making sure the event runs smoothly. They will also be responsible for advertising. People attending the event will need to bring their own food and drink and no barbecues will be allowed for safety reasons.

b) Station Road development

Mr. Poulton had nothing to report on the Station Road development.

c) Great Innings play area

Ms. Waltham said she felt that we had now reached an impasse concerning the installation of gates for the Great Innings play area. Jonathan Hart (East Herts Council) e-mailed on 1st December as follows.

'I have received a reply from Ian (Sharratt) head of our grounds section.

Ian's initial reaction is to decline the kind offer of paying for gates to the play area, as I have mentioned in the past if the play area required gates we would have placed them there ourselves. Ian has suggested I meet with him over the coming week and discuss these issues, and he also mentioned that we may be able to undertake modification of the dog grids to further prevent access from dog's to the children's play area.

I am also mindful with experience that there are other issues in the play area such as trip hazards to and from the multi use play area and we would concentrate our efforts on reinstating the ground in this area, this may be a consideration by the parish if money is available to spend on a project. Also, I don't know if the parish have had any contact with the builders of the new development in Station Road, with families moving in to the area they may provide funds towards local projects.

We will continue to monitor the playground, and on a personal note continue the thought process of a way to conclude this matter satisfactorily for all.'

It was agreed to e-mail Jonathan Hart to ask him if a Parish Councillor could attend the site meeting he is having with Ian Sharratt, so that they can discuss issues at the Great Innings play area. **Action: J. Allsop**

d) Allotments lease

The St. Albans Diocesan Board's solicitors have sent the Parish Council two copies of the new Allotment lease. Mr. Harris agreed to compare the new lease with the previous lease and report to the Parish Council at its January 2012 meeting.

Action: I. Harris

Erin Keenan (Rumball Sedgwick) has not responded to our e-mail concerning the high legal costs and the disbursement fees. The Clerk to e-mail her again requesting a response.

Action: J. Allsop

e) Website banner

Two out of the three applicants willing to design a banner for the Watton-at-Stone website, have confirmed that they will do the work on a voluntary basis (and therefore unpaid). One of the applicants is a Freelance Designer and the other an online Art Director/Designer.

Mr. Stock to contact both applicants.

Action: D. Stock

f) Future of the outside toilets

Refer to item 6 a 1, Review of actions - Sort out the locks and signage for the outside toilets.

g) 2012 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. This item was deferred until the July 2011 meeting when it was agreed to put this item on the December agenda with a view to writing 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.

After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed to e-mail Parish Councils as suggested but with a view to a meeting in September 2012 and not earlier in the year.

Action: M. Smith/J. Allsop

h) Additional Play Equipment on the Sportsfield

Hannah Brownlow wrote on 16th November confirming that the fund raising group for additional play equipment on the sportsfield has been formed.

Mr. Poulton, as the Parish Council representative, attended a meeting with the fund raising group and 'Support 4 Community Projects' on 23rd November. He said the group are hoping to raise £20,000.

However, applications for grants will have to go through the Parish Council or Community Hall. All funds raised will need to be kept in a separate account similarly to those held by the Community Hall Trustees for the Tennis Club funds.

i) Naming of the Waggon and Horses development

Mr. Poulton said he had been approached by the developer of the Waggon and Horses site asking if the Parish Council would like to give names to the listed building, which was once the Waggon and Horses and the two new properties at the rear of this property.

After discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council would not put any names forward.

j) Report on East Herts Council & Hertfordshire County Council Highways Joint Member Panel meeting on 21st November

This item was covered under item 5, Report by Bryan Hammond on the future of Hertfordshire Highways Locality Budget Scheme.

k) Report on East Herts Council - Town and Parish Councillors Briefing Session: East Herts Local Development Framework

Mr. Smith and Mr. Poulton attended a Local Development Framework Briefing Session on the 5th December.

This meeting was to inform Town and Parish Councils of the progress of the frameworks core strategy. It is expected that this will be in draft form by late spring early summer for further consultation.

Points of concern for Parish Councils were

- Infrastructure and transport
- Communication with Parishes
- Neighbourhood planning
- Preservation of rural character and viability
- Cross boundary and authority cooperation
- A flowchart of events to enable input at the correct time.
- Neighbourhood Plans

Recommendations and assistance will be coming soon so Parish Councillors can decide the way forward.

1) New homes bonus

Prior to the meeting, Mr. Smith e-mailed all Parish Councillors the following document.

Grants Policy and Procedure

‘Watton at Stone Parish Council expects to have access to funds arising from the New Homes Bonus scheme. The exact timing of these funds will depend on the receipts from Council Tax levied on new homes. It is with this in mind that we are formulating a policy to make the best use of this windfall income.

Policy

A grant is any payment or gift made by the Council to an organization or individual for a specific purpose. The law requires that Section 137 grants must be “in the interests of or will directly benefit the area or its inhabitants, or of part of it, or of some of it” and “the direct benefit should be commensurate with expenditure.” Similar considerations will apply when considering applications for other grants.

The Budget and Finance Committee will set an amount each year from which grants will be allocated during the following financial year. Once the Grants budget is exhausted, the parish council will only consider emergency requests for assistance, and generally only from organisations with which it has close links.

Application Procedure

Organisations requesting financial assistance will be asked to submit:

- A completed application form.
- Copies of their last year end accounts (where appropriate)
- If possible, the number, or percentage, of members that belong to the organisation and live within Watton Parish.
- Details of any restrictions placed on who can use/access their services.

Organisations will normally be expected to have clear written aims and objectives.

For grant requests for projects costing over £3,000 the Parish Council will require that the organisation has robust tendering regulations, e.g. obtaining a minimum of three tenders. The Parish Council reserves the right to request proof of the tender process. Projects notified to the Parish Council in advance and included in the Parish Council’s budget documents will only have the funds released on completion of the work. Whilst Watton Parish Council would not normally consider applications for Capital Projects, any such applications will require a more substantial case with supporting evidence of the community benefit.

Applications will not be considered from:

- A political party.
- Private organisations operated as a business.
- Others?

Assessment Procedure

A grant request, once received in writing, will be considered at the next meeting of the Finance Committee/Parish Council

Each application will be assessed on its own merits. However, to ensure as fair a distribution as possible of available funds, the Council will take into account the amount and frequency of any previous awards. Due account may also be taken of the extent to which funding has been sought or secured from other sources or fund raising activities. (The Clerk can advise on alternative funding sources).

Successful Applications

Organisations receiving grants are required to advise their users/members that the grant or equipment had been received from Watton Parish Council. Where possible, the Council will affix an appropriate label.

Where equipment is gifted to an organisation, the parish council requires that it be insured and maintained at the expense of the user unless otherwise agreed.’

Parish Councillors discussed Mr. Smith’s draft document and agreed that the Parish Council will need to adopt a policy to deal with the funds received from the New Homes Bonus. However, that it would be premature to adopt a policy at this stage. It was agreed that the Parish Council should carry-out a village wide survey to find out what new facilities/services residents would like to see in the parish before they adopt a policy.

This item to be put on the September 2012 agenda.

Agenda: 09/12

Mr. Smith said that he had spoken to East Herts Council about the New Homes Bonus scheme, who informed him that Watton-at-Stone is due to receive funding for new homes built in the following years.

- 2010 - £799
- 2011 - £576.

Mr. Smith said that these funds could either be held by East Herts Council until a later date, or paid to us with our precept.

It was agreed to contact East Herts Council asking them to add the New Homes Bonus payments for 2010 and 2011 to our precept payment due in April 2012. **Action: J. Allsop**

9 Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

This item was discussed after item 5 Report by Bryan Hammond on the future of Hertfordshire Highways Locality Budget Scheme.

Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Poulton reported on the following item.

- **Annual playground inspection and Damage to spring see-saw**

The Play Inspection Company inspected and photographed the piece of rotten wood from the see-saw on Wednesday 16th November.

Mr. Poulton has subsequently been in contact with Keith Dalton (Managing Director, The Play Inspection Company) who wrote on the 11th December as follows.

'I have spoken to our inspector (Lyn Williams) about your concerns and based on the photographic evidence you provided and the inspection of the beam undertaken by Chris Buss I am disappointed that this has been missed. Lyn has said that when he inspected the See-Saw he did notice the damaged area, but when probed his instrument was only entering a few millimetres and he was not concerned about the condition of the item.

He is somewhat devastated that his inspection did not reveal the rot in the timber and he does feel that he has let both you and us down. Having known Lyn for the better part of 10 years, I can honestly say that this type of error is extremely rare and we can only apologise for our omission

From our perspective even if he felt the timber was satisfactory we feel that the damage should have been noted on the report and this is something that we will address internally to ensure that all future reports are clearer in that respect.

With regard to the remaining section of the beam, Chris's inspection has revealed that the rot is severe and this section should also be removed and a new beam installed.

Please accept our apologies for this error and having investigated the matter this end I am as satisfied as I can be that it will not happen again in the future.'

Mr. Poulton thanked Mr. Smith for the excellent job he had done in removing the rotten beam and replacing it with a new one.

- **Repairs to surround for Coin meter for MPPA floodlighting**

Mark Lee has completed the repair work.

Mr. Poulton thanked Mr. Meischke for installing a metal bar on the internal side of the coin meter; this will prevent the machine from being stolen.

Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following item.

- **MPPA – line painting**

The line marking paint has been purchased and will be applied in Spring when the weather improves.

Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Report on Environment Sub-Committee meeting held on 13th December**

- **Golden Jubilee project**

The Environment Sub-Committee discussed a planting plan on the Lammas to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

The favoured plan is for a Roundel of Elm Trees with individual metal surrounds in the centre of the grassed area of the Lammas. The Elm has been largely lost to this area due to Dutch Elm disease back in the 1960s. The Environment Sub-Committee felt it would be appropriate to reintroduce this once

native tree. There are now disease-free varieties are now available. Mrs. Dinnin said that Mr. Smith drew up the original plans for a roundel of trees on the Lammas.

The cost of the trees and metal surrounds will be in the region of £2000.

Mr. Smith to obtain quotations.

Action: M. Smith

An alternative Jubilee project is the regeneration of the bike ramp area at the Mill Lane end of the Lammas. This area could be cleared, grassed and a seat(s) installed.

After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed that the Queen's Diamond Jubilee planting scheme would be the Roundel of Elm trees. The cost of the scheme could be funded from the £3,000 that Barrett Homes have agreed to donate towards the Jubilee celebrations in the village.

Groundwork Trust to be contacted about the regeneration of the bike ramp area.

Action: J. Allsop

The Parish Council can take money from its reserves to pay for the Jubilee celebrations in the village and use the New Homes bonuses due for the years 2010 and 2011.

• **Oak tree on sportsfield**

Mrs. Dinnin said that at the November Parish Council meeting, she reported that Herts Tree Care, Adam Welch and Henry Girling were all of the opinion that C-Trees recommendation for the Oak tree was too drastic.

She said that she had today received a telephone call from Tree Smiths, who have shown C-Trees report on the Oak tree to some colleagues and it is their opinion that if anything, the tree needed more extensive work that C-Trees had proposed. They suggested that now that we have had a proper survey done, if we do not carry out the work proposed then we might not be insured.

Mrs. Dinnin said it is the recommendation of the Environment Sub-Committee that the Parish Council accept Herts Tree Care's quotation of £590 plus VAT to deadwood and clean out and thin crown by 30% and remove side shoots from the main stem. Also that a 12 to 18 inch wooden barrier, made from 4 x 4 pieces of wood in a diamond formation, be erected around the Oak tree.

This was agreed by Parish Councillors.

Because this tree is covered by a Tree Preservation Order, East Herts Council permission will be needed before any work can be done to the Oak tree.

The Clerk to contact East Herts Council and Herts Tree Care accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

Mrs. Dinnin to check to see if Adam Welch has pruned back the Oak tree overhanging one of the MPPA floodlights.

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 prior to the meeting.

ii) Monthly village-report

Mr. Stock completed the report on 8th December.

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

- **Allotments** – the far right-hand corner of the uncultivated area looks terrible. Also, tow of the 'cultivated' allotments look like rubbish tips.

- **Salt Bins** – Great Innings (outside 93) and two at Moorymead Close need filling.

Mr. Stock asked why there were three salt bins in Moorymead Close, whereas Hazeldell only has one and is badly in need of an additional bin at the bottom of the hill.

Mr. Poulton said that he had e-mailed Hertfordshire Highways requesting that they fill the Great Innings salt bin. He suggested that two of the Moorymead Close salt bins might not belong to Hertfordshire Highways and therefore they may not fill them. At the current time, Hertfordshire Highways would not agree to the installation and filling of any additional salt bins in the village.

Mr. Stock suggested that one of these salt bins could be relocated in Hazeldell, even if we have to fill them ourselves. This did not proceed further.

- **Notices**

Mr. Stock reminded Parish Councillors that we should continue to remove inappropriate or out-of-date notices from telegraph poles etc throughout the village.

iii) Weekly sportsfield-report and action

None.

iv) **Website**

• **Planning applications**

The planning applications file to be uploaded to the Watton-at-Stone website under the Parish Council heading and updated as and when necessary.

Action: J. Allsop

v) **Website diary**

None.

10 Correspondence received

a) **CDA for Hertfordshire - Help with the Digital Switchover**

This item was discussed under item 5 - Report by Bryan Hammond on the future of Hertfordshire Highways Locality Budget Scheme.

b) **Draft Drought Management Plan 2011 - Public Consultation now open**

Mr. Knight said that the Clerk had given him a hard copy of the consultation papers two days ago. He agreed to draft a response for the Parish Council's approval.

Action: I. Knight

c) **Hertfordshire Highways re Request for speed reduction – Whempstead**

All Parish Councillors were forwarded two e-mails from Paul Patmore (Hertfordshire Highways) concerning a petition requesting speeding control measures in Whempstead. Parish Councillors noted the contents of these e-mails.

d) **Policing Plan 2012**

All Parish Councillors were forwarded a letter (dated 1st December) and response form for comments on Hertfordshire Police Authority's Draft Strategic Policing Plan 2012.

It was agreed to ask Mrs. McCash to draft a response for approval at the January 2012 Parish Council meeting.

Action: H. McCash

11 Village organisations

• **Watton Youth Drop Inn**

Watton Youth Drop Inn will hold their last session of the year on Wednesday 14th December.

They will reopen again in the New Year on Wednesday 6th January 2012.

• **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**

Mrs. Dinnin said that the Pre-School Playgroup held a very successful Winter Warmer on Sunday 4th December.

• **Watton-at-Stone Scout & Guide Group:** Nothing to report.

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

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

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

12 Items for Parish News

There were three items identified for inclusion in the February 2012 issue of the Parish News.

• Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

Action: I. Knight

• Planting of a roundel of Elm trees on the Lammas.

Action: J. Allsop

• Community Hall external toilets.

Action: J. Allsop

• **The meeting closed at 2134.**

• **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 17th January 2012.**