

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 21st February 2012

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
	Ms. Emma Waltham	The Clerk (Mrs. Jane Allsop)

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence from Mr. John Meischke.

2 Public Participation

None

3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

Mr. Smith reported on the following items.

- **Terms of reference – Hannah Brownlow -**
Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall – Exclusion of the Press and Public.
- **Drain in Perrywood Lane**
Refer to bulleted items following item 7 i, Specific items - Power cuts.
- **Rubbish left by Network Rail workers**
Refer to bulleted items following item 7 i, Specific items - Power cuts.
- **Footpath on Walkern Road**
Refer to item 8 a - Environment Sub-Committee.
- **Four additional planning applications**
Refer to item 6 a, Planning applications.
- **CDA for Herts – Membership renewal**
Refer to item 9 h, Correspondence received.
- **Veolia water**
Refer to item 9 i, Correspondence received.
- **Community service on 1st July**
Refer to item 9 j, Correspondence received.
- **Planning decisions**
Delete planning decision. These decisions were reported on at the January 2012 Parish Council meeting.

4 Declaration of Interests

Mr. Filer declared a personal interest in item 6 a, Planning - 3 White House Close (Mr. Filer's daughter lives adjacent to White House Close).

Mr. Poulton declared a pecuniary interest in item 9 h, Correspondence received – CDA for Herts (Mr. Poulton is Vice-President of CDA for Herts).

5 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 17th January 2012**
Mrs. McCash proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record. Mr. Knight seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

b) Review of actions

- **Draft an article re external toilets change of use and e-mail it to Parish Councillors**
Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall Trustees - External toilets.
- **Ask Halcyon Courts to submit quotation for repairing the damaged area of the MPPA surface**
Mr. Knight said that due to the recent inclement weather, he had not yet contacted Halcyon Courts.
Action: I. Knight
- **Inspect the War Memorial garden re additional planting required**
Refer to item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - War Memorial planting.
- **Inspect litterbin on Abel Smith land near footpath to the Lammas**
Parish Councillors agreed that the litterbin should be removed.

Mr. Smith to contact Alan Grant (Abel Smith Estate Manager) prior to removing the bin, to check that there are no objections to it being removed. **Action: M. Smith**

- **Investigate cost of goal post inserts**

Mr. Knight said that he obtained the price of the goal post inserts to fit the current goat posts and after authorisation from two Parish Councillors, purchased two sets of round inserts. Unfortunately, the goal posts are round but go into the original square sockets. Therefore, the inserts will not fit and Mr. Knight said he had returned them and is waiting for a refund.

Mr. Smith to obtain inserts to fit the square sockets. **Action: M. Smith**

- **Write article for Parish News**

The Clerk said that unfortunately, she sent the Parish News article about the willow tree on the Lammas to Ian Wilson's personal e-mail address and not the Parish News address and therefore the article did not appear in the February issue. This article will now appear in the March edition

c) Action points outstanding for more than two months

None

d) Action points resolved

1. Compare the new Allotment lease with the previous lease
2. E-mail Parish Councillors response to Veolia draft Drought Management Plan
3. E-mail response to the 2012 policing plan to Hertfordshire Police Authority
4. E-mail Jonathan Hart again re date for site meeting at the Great Innings play area
5. Include 9-monthly accounts report in the Community Hall and Parish Council accounts for 2011/12
6. Return completed precept form to East Herts Council
7. Send a copy of the 'Terms of reference' agreement to all Parish Councillors
8. Ask Ted Brown to clear the leaves around the edge of the MPPA
Mr. Knight said that Ted Brown had been asked to clear the leaves but because of the recent bad weather, the leaves had not been cleared. **Action: I. Knight**
9. Monitor misaligned floodlight on the MPPA on a regular basis
10. Give Mr. Meischke the minute history re the litterbin on Abel Smith land
11. Change Village Events website entry to read Village Events and Notices
12. E-mail all Parish Councillors document re Independent examination of Hertfordshire Mineral Waste Development Framework
13. Give Mr. Knight £25 donation for River Beane Restoration Association
14. Inspect brushes in Community Hall and purchase more robust ones if required

6 Planning

a) Applications

i) **The White House, 99 High Street, Watton-at-Stone (3/11/1752/LB)**

Erection of rear fence to enclose garden area (part retrospective)

Refer to the item below.

ii) **The White House, 99 High Street, Watton-at-Stone (3/11/1752/LB)**

Retention of rear fence to enclose garden area (Listed Building consent)

In line with the Parish Council's Planning Protocol, Mr. Harris inspected the site and saw no problems with the two applications for 99 High Street. Because of the nature of the application, he decided it was unnecessary to visit any neighbours, and Mr. Meischke and Mr. Stock endorsed Mr. Harris' recommendation that the Clerk be instructed to write to the Planning Department stating that the Parish Council had no comment on this application.

iii) **128 High Street (3/12/0085/FP)**

Removal of 2 no existing UPVC window frames to front elevation, reduce size of one opening from 2400 x 1200 to 1800 x 1200 (to match adjacent one) Install 2 no. UPVC bow windows with Georgian bars.

Removal of existing UPVC barge boards, replace with cellular UPVC decorative barge boards

In line with the Parish Council's Planning Protocol, Mr. Meischke visited the neighbouring residents. They had no objections to the application and because of the nature of it, Mr. Meischke recommended that the Clerk be instructed to write to the Planning Department stating that the Parish Council had no comment on this application. Mr. Harris and Mr. Stock endorsed his recommendation.

- **Additional planning applications**

Mr. Harris assigned the following applications to the appropriate Parish Councillors.

Application	Parish Councillor
• 3, White House Close	Mr. Harris
• 21 Lammas Road	Mrs. Dinnin
• 49 c High Street (2 applications)	Mrs. McCash

Mr. Smith said that all Parish Councillors should be sent the e-mail notifications for new planning applications as and when they are received. This was agreed. The Clerk to act accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

b) Decisions

None.

7 Specific items

a) Agree meeting dates for the Civic Year 2012/13

It was agreed that Parish Council meetings shall continue to be held on the third Tuesday in the month, namely:

- Tuesday 15th May 2012
- Tuesday 19th June 2012
- Tuesday 17th July 2012
- Tuesday 18th September 2012
- Tuesday 16th October 2012
- Tuesday 20th November 2012
- Tuesday 18th December 2012
- Tuesday 15th January 2013
- Tuesday 19th February 2013
- Tuesday 19th March 2013
- Tuesday 16th April 2013

The Parish Council meeting on the 15th May 2012 will be preceded by the Annual Parish Meeting (starting at 1900) and the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

b) Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations - meeting held on Thursday 16th February 2012

Mr. Knight said that earlier today he e-mailed everyone involved, the notes of the jubilee celebration meeting held on 6th February. A flier updating villagers about the event will be placed in the March issue of the Parish News.

It was agreed that the Parish Council need to earmark some money from reserves for the Jubilee village picnic. Examples of purchases to be made are, mugs for the children of the village, staging, microphones, tents from Hertford Scouts and rubbish bins. It was agreed that expenditures should be approved as and when they occur.

Mrs. Dinnin said she had investigated the purchase of mugs and having acquired several samples, obtained a quotation of £670 plus VAT from Insignia. This was for a white mug with the Blue Peter Jubilee logo in blue and an inscription on the reverse in blue. Mrs. Dinnin showed Parish Councillors a picture of a coloured version and it was agreed that this would be much better. The cost of this mug from Mugstore would be £765 plus VAT. The Parish Council approved an expenditure of up to £950 on mugs. The money will be taken from the Parish Council reserves.

Mrs. Dinnin to order the mugs accordingly.

Action: C. Dinnin

The inscription on the back of the mugs will include the village Logo and state.

'Presented by:

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Diamond Jubilee of H M Queen Elizabeth II

1952-2012'

The Clerk to find out if our current Parish Council insurance policy with AON Limited covers for the Jubilee Picnic event.

Action: J. Allsop

c) Barrett Homes

Barratt Homes will be presenting the Parish Council with a cheque for £3,000 on Wednesday 29th February on the Lammas, with a photo-shoot at the Roundel of Elm trees. Mr. Poulton said that he and Mr. Smith have been personally invited to the Barratt Homes presentation, but he was sure that any Parish Councillor wishing to attend, could do so. Mr. Poulton to e-mail Parish Councillors the time of the presentation. **Action: N. Poulton**

Parish Councillors approved the following expenditures, totally £2960, which will be paid for out of the £3,000 grant from Barratt Homes.

- Trees £744
- Guards £644
- Installation £200
- Entertainment £1250
- St John's Ambulance £122

Mr. Poulton said that he had e-mails on file from Barrett Homes approving their £3,000 donation.

Mr. Filer said that that in the unlikely event that Barratt Homes do not give us a cheque for £3,000, the Parish Council should draw on its reserves to meet the above expenditure. This was agreed.

Mr. Poulton said that Barratt Homes would be supplying a plaque, which will be erected on one of the guards protecting the Elm trees.

d) Great Innings play area

Ms. Waltham said that she, Mr. Stock and Mr. Meischke met with Jonathan Hart and Trevor Waldoock (East Herts Council) on Monday 6th February to discuss the possibility of gates being fitted to the 2 entrances to the children's play area at Great Innings.

Although it was felt that the initial reception from the East Herts Council representatives was hostile (which was pointed out to them), once it was made clear that this play area was very much appreciated and was considered to be a popular and well-used facility and that the Parish Council was attempting to address some local concerns, meaningful detailed discussions ensued. In the main, the concerns raised involved the problem of dogs being able to easily enter the play area (regardless of the existing grids) and the risk of young children been able to leave the play area and wander on to the adjacent road before being detected.

The outcome of this 45-minute site meeting was felt to be positive and some useful ideas had been agreed for consideration by East Herts Council.

Ms. Waltham said she was surprised when, a few hours later, Jonathan Hart e-mailed her as follows.

'Lovely to meet everyone this morning, I hope we didn't come across as being too hostile towards your ideas and that we could work something out.

Trevor and I briefly sat and worked out a rough estimate, the cost would be around about £ 2900 , I will speak to Ian Sharratt with regards to your concerns, and will suggest that if the parish can pay for the gates £ 1300 we will cover the cost of installation etc.

If at all possible please can you provide me with any minutes you have for meetings where the concerns of the residents have been highlighted, this will give us the ammunition to get this done.'

The main issues are that children can easily get out of the area unattended and that large dogs can easily walk over the entrance grids into the play area. At the September Parish Council meeting, Ms. Waltham reported that a dog tided to the external railings bit a child that came out of the play area unattended.

Parish Councillors approved the purchase of the gates.

The Clerk to e-mail Jonathan Hart accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

Ms. Waltham said she knew several people who were willing to help hand around petitions requesting that gates be fitted to the 2 entrances to the Great Innings play area. This could also be backed up by individuals e-mailing East Herts Council with this request. She agreed to pursue this further.

Action: E. Waltham

e) Allotments lease

Having received the table comparing the provisions of the old lease against the proposed new one, as circulated by Mr. Harris on 31st January, the Parish Council resolved that it be agreed and authorised any two members of the Parish Council to execute it on the Council's behalf.

Andrew Stovin (Consultant Solicitor, Property Department, Debenhams Ottaway Solicitors) to be notified accordingly.

Action: I. Harris/J. Allsop

f) Website banner

Refer to item 8 b iii, Website.

g) Salt bins in Hazeldell

Mr. Stock raised this issue again because it did not progress when he raised it as part of his village report in December.

The following is an extract from the minutes of the December Parish Councils village-report he carried-out on 8th December.

- **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.

Mr. Stock said that during the recent falls of snow and periods of very low temperatures, it was very difficult, if not impossible, for traffic to negotiate and exit the two main slopes in Hazeldell. The one existing salt-bin is far from being sufficient to ease the situation and many people were therefore unable to use their cars etc to go about their business. He remained of the opinion that a new salt bin located on the kerb-side opposite 104 and 106 Hazeldell would, to some extent, ease the problem. He suggested that we write to Hertfordshire Highways asking them why there were three salt bins in Moorymead Close (2 of which are at the main entrance and one is located in a level area of the road) whereas Hazeldell only has the one small one and is badly in need of an additional salt bin.

Mr. Poulton said that during the snowy weather Hertfordshire Highways were contacted by a few residents from Watton-at-Stone about the slippery condition of the footpaths, particularly around the school area. They were all informed that the clearance of footpaths in the village was not a Highways responsibility but a Parish Council one. Mr. Poulton said he had investigated these reports and Hertfordshire Highways had apologised that members of the public were given the wrong information and confirmed that the footpaths and roads are their responsibility.

Mrs. Dinnin said that School Lane was also treacherous during the snowy conditions. Mr. Poulton commented that unfortunately the ownership of School Lane is unknown. The Clerk said it was her understanding that the footpath had belonged to the Diocesan Board and the land was being transferred into the ownership of Hertfordshire Highways. Mr. Poulton said that this was thought to be the case, however, the Diocesan Board cannot find any legal documents to show they own School Lane.

Mr. Harris commented that a smashed salt bin has been found on the Waggon and Horses building-site. This bin used to be located on the grass verge near the post box, at the junction with High Street/Walkern Road and went missing several years ago.

Mr. Poulton suggested that we write to Hertfordshire Highways requesting a new salt bin for Hazeldell and a replacement bin for the High Street/Walkern Road junction. He hoped that Eralp Yucelt (Assistant Director at Hertfordshire Highways) would give serious consideration to our request. This was agreed by all Parish Councillors present, the Clerk to write accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

h) Great Innings traffic

Ms. Waltham said that there is a traffic problem in Great Innings North. The problem occurs mainly in the evening and is caused by parked vans and cars. Drivers proceeding down Great Innings North have to drive in the middle of the road because of the parked vehicles. They are then met, almost head on, by cars coming up Great Innings at high speeds and have no road space to get out of the way.

Ms. Waltham said she had discussed the problem with Mr. Stock who told her of a similar problem in Hazeldell some time ago, in particular with cars parking on pavements and causing an obstruction. In this case, the Police did visit Hazeldell and placed notices on offending vehicles for the attention of their owners. Initially this did ease the problem although it has since returned. Mr. Stock had then suggested to Ms. Waltham that, in his opinion the best option at this stage, would be to contact the Police to inform them of the situation and ask them to visit the area during the evening so that they could review it for themselves. Also, Ms. Waltham can then highlight the problems to the police and discuss ways in which the situation can be resolved.

It was agreed that this was the best way forward and we contact the Police outlining the problem and asking them to make an evening visit to assess the situation.

Action: J. Allsop

i) Power cuts

Ms. Waltham said that she, and other residents in Great Innings, have been experiencing power cuts on a regular basis, sometimes for a few minutes and at other times for several hours at a time. However, she said that the problem has reduced somewhat of late and had been worse just before Christmas.

No other Parish Councillors reported unusual level of power cuts in their areas.

• **Drain in Perrywood Lane**

Mr. Filer said that he was approached a couple of weeks ago by Marita Morrissey (Ponderosa, 2 Perrywood Lane) to ask if the Parish Council could get Hertfordshire Highways to clear the road drain just past her house. When this drain gets completely blocked the water from a natural spring runs down and across the road. During freezing conditions, the road becomes a skating rink and can be very dangerous.

Mrs. Morrissey informed Mr. Filer that once this drain is clear and free running, she would be willing to keep it clear.

It was agreed to write to Eralp Yucelt (Hertfordshire Highways) asking him to clear the drain. A copy of this letter to be sent to our District Councillor, Mr. Poulton.

Action: J. Allsop

• **Rubbish left by Network Rail workers**

Mr. Filer said Judy Borlase (Perrywood Farm) approached him about the mess left by Network Rail whilst working on the line and parking their vans on the railway bridge.

Mr. Filer said he had inspected the area, which looks disgusting. There are paper cups, plastic bottles, lunch wrappers, paper bags, crisp packets etc on both sides of the road and also on the other side of the railway fence.

It was agreed to write to Network Rail asking them to clear the rubbish from these sites.

Action: J. Allsop

• **Drinking water**

The Clerk was contacted by John Ellis (37 Lammas Road) concerning foul tasting water at the Methodist Church Hall, following their improvement works. He informed the Clerk that during a recent Methodist Church meeting, this problem was raised and some members of the committee said they had also experienced foul tasting water in their homes. The Clerk said that the water at her home often tasted unpleasant. No other Parish Councillors present at the meeting were experiencing problems with the taste of their water.

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		
R.B.R.A.	Donation	25.00
1 st Call Signs	Repair of byelaw signs on the Lammas	45.60
Allotment & Garden Association	Public Liability insurance for Allotment Holders	82.30
East Herts Council	emptying 3 dog-waste bins on 65 occasions – 01.04.11 - 31.03.12	521.89
AON Limited	Additional insurance premium to cover 6 tree guards	6.30
Jim Morrissey	Audit fee 2010/11	100.00
Wages and salaries	February 2012	999.75
Virgin Media	Phone charges to 03/02/2012	<u>21.90</u>
		<u>1802.74</u>
 Cheques received		
East Herts Council	New homes bonus for 2009/10	799.00
HMRC	Vat refund for 2010/11	<u>1023.83</u>
		<u>1822.83</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall**Petty Cash – Receipts**

Barbara Smart – Pavilion	48.00
Sharon Ling –Pavilion	68.00
Floodlighting to 19.02.12	240.00
Jim Keen – Dec 2011 & Jan 2012	110.50
Watton Youth Football – Main Hall	32.00
Caroline Hayes - Main Hall & Pavilion	52.00
Dominic Castagna - Main Hall & Pavilion	78.00
Laura Meldrum - Main Hall & Pavilion	39.00
Paula Cross - Main Hall & Pavilion	39.00
Cheryl Daniels – Main Hall & Pavilion	39.00

745.50**Petty Cash –Payments**

Cheryl Daniels – return of hire charge because no water due to burst water pipe	<u>39.00</u>
	<u>39.00</u>

Cheques issued

Jane Allsop – Laidlaw	4 keys	81.36
H. M. Revenue and Customs	VAT return 10/11	331.67
Gary Smith	window cleaning	58.00
Wages	February 2012	336.60
Hertfordshire County Council	Cleaning materials	88.68

896.31**Cheques received**

Watton School	for Dots and Tots	86.00
Singing for the Terrified	Pavilion hire	96.00
Mr. and Mrs. Aston	Main Hall and Pavilion hire	52.00
Tennis Club	donation towards cost of moss kill	<u>110.00</u>

344.00

Parish Councillors approved the above payments.

Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Poulton reported on the following item.

- **External toilets**

Adrian Thompson has removed the Ladies toilet sign and fitted the new stainless steel Ladies and Gents toilet sign in its place. He has also fitted the internal locks on this toilets door.

It was agreed, to try to place a notice in the March edition of the Parish News advising that the Parish Council will be permanently closing the Gents toilets at the beginning of April and that the Ladies facilities, which have two toilets, will become unisex facilities.

A notice to be placed in the March issue of the Parish News advising that the Gents toilets will be closed from 1st April. If our entry is too late for the March edition (the normal deadline date is 12th of every month), a notice to be placed in the April edition advising that the closure date will be 1st May. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Overflow leak in Ladies toilet**

Mr. Poulton thanked Mr. Knight, the Clerk and her husband, who helped with dealing with the Ladies toilet leak on Sunday 29th January. The ball valve in the cistern seized and water was overflowing in the referees changing room (which is currently used by Beane Valley as a storage room) and into the corridor and large changing rooms. The overflow for the toilet goes into the shower, however the water could not go down the drain because Beane Valley had filled the shower with their equipment. Mr. Knight jammed the ball valve up with the toilet brush to stop the flow of water and the toilet remained locked until Mark from James Turner Limited was able to fit a new cistern which now overflows down the toilet pan. An isolation valve was also fitted to this toilet.

- **Replacement heating controller**

One of the heating system timing control failed and was replaced whilst James Turner were on site repairing the toilet. All three heating controllers have died within a fairly short timescale.

- **Boiler leak**

Mr. Knight and the Clerk attended to a leak at the Community Hall on Sunday 12th February when one of the boiler compression joints came apart during the very cold weather. The mains water was turned off to stop the flow of water and the heating controls were also turned off until James Turner carried out repairs early the following day.

A hirer, who was just starting her children's party when this problem occurred, had to get drinking water from her sister's home in Rectory Lane, she also had to bring water on site to flush the toilets. The Clerk reimbursed the £39 hire charge.

Mr. Knight said that there was no lagging on the pipes and it was agreed to ask James Turners Limited to give advice on how this area can be frost protected. **Action: N. Poulton/J. Meischke**

- **Internet connection**

Mr. Poulton said that the Clerk contacted Virgin Media Business to find out how much it would cost to install internet at the Community Hall. She was informed that Virgin Media Business were not accepting any new business unless a cable connection already exists in the building, which it does not. They suggested that Virgin Media Home might be willing to connect the Community Hall. The Clerk said that although there is cable just outside the Community Hall in School Lane, Virgin Media do not have any record of this cable existing.

Parish Councillors agreed not to pursue this matter further until such time that we have sufficient requests for internet connect at the Community Hall. To date, we have no such requests.

- **Licence for music live and recorded music**

The Community Hall is currently not licensed for live or recorded music.

Mr. Filer said that the Memorial Hall has two licences, a PRS (Performing Rights Society) licence and a PPL (Phonographic Performance Ltd) licence. He agreed to forward the contact details to the Clerk so she can investigate the costs involved in covering the Community Hall as well as the Queen's Jubilee Village Picnic event on Sunday 3rd June. **Action: D. Filer/J. Allsop**

- **List of actions in the event of an emergency**

The Community Hall Trustees need to compile a list of actions required in the event of an emergency, for example, where to turn the mains water off or isolate the central heating. This list, when compiled, to be put up in the internal storeroom. **Action: Trustees**

- **Terms of reference – Hannah Brownlow**

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

Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following item.

- **Leaf clearance**

Mr. Knight said that Ted Brown had been asked to clear the leaves but because of the recent bad weather the leaves had not been cleared. **Action: I. Knight**

- **Floodlight**

Mr. Knight said that the protective screen over the floodlight on the Rectory side of the MPPA is going brown, presumably because the bulb is overheating.

Mr. Knight said that no action was needed at the present time and he would monitor this floodlight and the one out of alignment. **Action: I. Knight**

- **Surface condition**

Refer to item 5 b, Review of actions - Ask Halcyon Courts to submit quotation for repairing the damaged area of the MPPA surface.

- **Goal post inserts**

Refer to item 5 b, Review of actions - Investigate cost of goal post inserts.

Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Acceptance of Environment Sub Committee meeting held on the 13th December 2011**

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

- **Roundel of Elm Trees**

Parish Councillors approved, retrospectively, the planting of six Elm trees and six iron tree guards, at a total cost of £1588 plus VAT (£744 for the trees, £644 for the tree guards and £200 for the planting and installation).

- **Oak tree TPO refusal from East Herts Council**

Mrs. Dinnin said that Malcolm Amey (East Herts Council) had refused permission for the work to the Oak tree on the sportsfield outlined in Herts Tree Care's quotation (to deadwood and clean out and thin crown by 30% and remove side shoots from main stem).

The Clerk to contact Herts Tree Care informing them of East Herts Council decision. **Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Amey had approved the work outlined by Richard Wilson, C-Trees, in his report dated 8th September 2011.

The Parish Council did have the option to appeal East Herts Council's decision, however, it was agreed that this would be futile.

After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed to arrange a meeting with Richard Wilson, to find out what other options are available for preserving the aesthetics of the Oak tree. **Action: C. Dinnin**

- **Adam Welch - Tree report**

All Parish Councillors have been e-mailed a copy of Adam Welch's tree report.

Mrs. Dinnin to speak to Adam Welch asking him to clarify which of the three Sportsfield Oak tree he refers to in his tree report. **Action: C. Dinnin**

This item to remain on the agenda. **Agenda: 03/12**

- **Groundwork Trust**

Mrs. Dinnin said that following receipt of an e-mail and grant application form, she had spoken to Groundwork Trust regarding the regeneration of the bike ramp area on the Lammas. She said that nearly all the Groundwork Trust funding for this year has been spent, however we should not be deterred from applying for a grant because we could still be successful this year or could get funding next year. However, Groundwork Trust would almost certainly be able to provide us with the manpower required to clear the area, this would not include the flattening of the bike ramps, which the Parish Council would need to do themselves.

It was agreed to complete and submit a Groundwork Trust application form. **Action: C. Dinnin**

- **War Memorial planting**

Mrs. Dinnin said she had inspected the War Memorial garden and could see there were some dead branches on the Bay tree. It was agreed to wait for better weather to decide on what additional planting is required.

This item to remain on the agenda under Environment Sub-Committee. **Agenda: 03/12**

- **Allotments**

Mike Freeman has produced letter to be sent out to new allotment holders with their tenancy agreement.

Mrs. Dinnin said she would like this letter to go out to all allotment holders. This was agreed.

Action: C. Dinnin/J. Allsop

- **Repair of broken byelaw sign on the Lammas**

Mrs. Dinnin said that Mr. Meischke has arranged for the byelaw sign, which was smashed, to be repaired by 1st Call Signs. The repaired sign has not yet been reinstated. **Action: J. Meischke**

- **Footpath on Walkern Road**

Adam Welch contacted Mrs. Dinnin informing her that the footpath on Walkern Road needed cutting back.

On Mrs. Dinnin request, Adam Welch supplied a quotation of £60 for cutting back the overhanging branches and leaving them on site or £140 to cut back and remove the waste from site.

It was questioned if this footpath is our responsibility or that of the Abel Smith Estate. Mrs. Dinnin and Mr. Smith to investigate and make a site visit. **Action: C. Dinnin/M. Smith**

b) Routine reports

i) Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests

Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke carried-out the emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests on Sunday 19th February.

Two lights are out in the changing room corridor. Mr. Poulton will be meeting with D. P Electrics tomorrow so that the lights can be repaired or replaced as necessary.

ii) Monthly village-report

Mr. Poulton completed the report on 18th February.

- **Cricket Club shed** - there is graffiti on the shed and the down-pipe needs repairing.

Mr. Poulton said that if the down-pipe is not repaired, then the building will get wet inside and start to deteriorate. Mr. Knight to ask the Cricket Club to repair the down-pipe. **Action: I. Knight**

Mr. Knight said that it should be the Parish Council's responsibility to remove the graffiti.

This was agreed.

- **Sportsfield hedge** – there are two large holes in hedge.

It was agreed to inspect the hedge in spring. **Agenda: 04/12**

- **Weeds** - around the play equipment safety surface.
Ted Brown to be asked to spray the weeds. **Action: N. Poulton**
- **Horse spring sit-on** – holes appearing in safety surface.
- **Vents** - two air vents missing on large window facing sportsfield.
- **Salt bins** - most of the salt bins need filling. Hertfordshire Highways are scheduled to fill these.
- **For sale sign** - Jonathan Hunt for sale sign by Station Road salt bin needs removing. **Action: J. Allsop**

iii) Weekly sportsfield-report and action

None.

iv) Website

• Website banner

On 25th January, Mr. Stock e-mailed a copy of the first proposal for the website banner (as produced by Steve Betts based on discussions with Mr. Stock) to all Parish Councillors for their comment. The only comments received by him concerned the colour of the text.

With the aid of his laptop computer, Mr. Stock showed all Parish Councillors the revised banner in which the text-colour had been changed to green. All Parish Councillors approved this revised version of the banner and agreed that we adopt it.

Mr. Stock to contact Steve Betts asking him to forward the file to the Clerk for uploading to the Watton-at-Stone website.

Action: D. Stock

Mr. Stock to write to Steve Betts to formally thank him, on behalf of the Parish Council, for his interest and valuable assistance.

Action: D. Stock

• Village logo

Mr. Stock said that the Clerk had mentioned to him that because the Village Logo will no longer appear as part of the banner it may be worth considering it being placed somewhere else on the Home Page.

After giving this consideration, Mr. Stock felt that this was not advisable because it would not only distract from the purpose of the banner but also disturb the balance and cleanliness of the page. He therefore felt that it would be a good idea to have a new page on the website to introduce the Village Logo and to outline the terms of its use if any of our village organizations etc wanted to adopt it. This was agreed. **Action: D. Stock**

Mr. Poulton said that there is someone advertising in the Parish News, who has modified the Village Logo without agreement from the Parish Council. Mr. Knight to investigate.

Action: I. Knight

• Parish News

Mr. Stock reminded Parish Councillors that, although we like and support the idea of the Parish News being available to website users, we had agreed that our website shall not include any commercial content.

Therefore, if the BSWW Parish News ask the Parish Council to upload the Parish News onto the Watton-at-Stone website, then all commercial content (e.g. adverts) must be removed before any uploading takes place. This was agreed and Mr. Knight said that this would be easy to do because the advert pages are separate to the news pages.

• Website updates

Mr. Stock said that the Pub/Restaurant section of the website needs some minor updating to reflect the current situation.

Action: D. Stock

• E-mail from Young Farmers

Katie Thirgood e-mailed on 25th January asking if they could put a notice on the Watton-at-Stone website about the Herts Young Farmers, who are a charity run organisation for 10 to 26 year olds.

After discussion, it was agreed to inform the Herts Young Farmers that their notice will be uploaded to the 'Village Events and Notices' section of the Watton-at-Stone website.

Action: J. Allsop

• Church events

Mrs. McCash to give the Clerk details of events being held at the Parish Church, for uploading to the 'Village Events and Notices' section of the Watton-at-Stone website.

Action: H. McCash

v) Website diary

None.

9 Correspondence received

a) E-mail from Avril Gardiner re pudding stone and Waggon and Horses

Mr. Smith read out an e-mail (dated 23rd January) from Avril Gardiner asking if any measures have been put in place to safeguard the piece of pudding stone outside the former Waggon and Horses public house.

Mr. Poulton said that he had received assurances from the builders that they have no intentions of removing the pudding stone.

The Clerk said that Mr. Meischke had also contacted the builders and received the same assurance and an e-mail has been sent to Avril Gardiner accordingly.

b) E-mail from Young Farmers

Refer to item 8 b iv, Website - E-mail from Young Farmers.

c) E-mail from Hertfordshire County Council re Pre-Submission Waste Site Allocations consultation

This document has been e-mailed to all Parish Councillors. Parish Councillors agreed that the Waste Site Allocation proposals could affect Watton-at-Stone and we should respond to this consultation.

Mr. Smith to complete and submit the on-line consultation form.

Action: M. Smith

d) Letter from Hertfordshire Constabulary re policing in Watton-at-Stone

Mr. Smith read out a letter, dated 26th January, from Gerry McDonald (Chief Inspector, Hertfordshire Constabulary) in response to our letter to the former Chief Inspector, Jon Speed, concerning the lack of policing in Watton-at-Stone.

The Clerk to e-mail a copy of Chief Inspector McDonald's letter to all Parish Councillors.

Action: J. Allsop

Parish Councillors agreed that the police attendance in Watton-at-Stone was insufficient. Mrs .McCash to draft a response to Chief Inspector McDonald's letter and asked Parish Councillors to forward her any comments they would like included.

Action: H. McCash

e) Letter from Malcolm Amey re Oak tree on Sportsfield

Refer item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Oak tree TPO refusal from East Herts Council.

f) CPRE – Hertfordshire Village of the Year 2012

It was agreed that due to the amount of work involved and our previous experience of this event, the Parish Council will not enter Watton-at-Stone into the Hertfordshire Village of the Year 2012 competition.

g) E-mail re Urgent request re proposal to empower Town and Parish Councils

Mr. Smith said that in June 2011, the Parish Council e-mailed Steve Shaw (National Co-ordinator, Local Works promoting the Sustainable Communities Act) offering its support to Leiston-cum-Sizewell Town Council proposals especially when major developments need to be considered or items such as wind turbine applications are received.

Steve Shaw has e-mailed again asking the Parish Council to e-mail their support to help the Sustainable Communities Act succeed by writing to both Communities Minister Greg Clark with the following points.

1. Express our concern that the pending Sustainable Communities Act regulations will weaken the Act, when they need to strengthen it.
2. Say the regulations need to include three things:
 - A duty on Local Authorities to try to reach agreement with local people on what proposals to put forward under the Act - because this duty is fundamental to the 'bottom-up' philosophy and process that the Act has set up,
 - A time limit on dealing with proposals local people make - because in the first round people had to wait over 18 months to receive a response and if there are delays like this again people will be frustrated and simply lose interest; and
 - The right for town and parish councils to be able to submit proposals under the Act - because all councils should be able to get involved directly and this was explicitly intended by the Sustainable Communities Act Amendment Act 2010.
3. Ask your MP to please write to Communities Minister, Greg Clark, urging him to ensure the three things above are included in the pending regulations.

It was agreed that the Parish Council should write accordingly to Communities Minister Greg and our MP, Oliver Heald.

Action: J. Allsop

h) CDA membership

As Vice-President of CDA for Herts, Mr. Poulton abstained from taking part in any debate relating to this item. The annual subscription for CDA for Herts is £30. Parish Councillors agreed to renew their annual subscription with CDA.

Action: J. Allsop

i) Veolia water

Mr. Poulton has forwarded an e-mail concerning the water shortage in the East Herts Catchment area to all Parish Councillors. He said that he would keep Parish Councillors informed of further information on the water shortage in this area when it comes available.

j) Community service on 1st July 2012

Mrs. Pauline Bunce, of the Churches Serving Watton, wrote on 20th February requesting the use of the Pavilion facilities and sportsfield for the Community Service to be held on Sunday 1st July 2012 at 1030. They will require the facilities from 0930 to 1200 at the latest.

It was agreed that the facilities be made available for the Community Service free of charge (as in the past).

The Clerk to notify Mrs. Bunce and Mr. Knight to notify the Cricket Club.

Action: J. Allsop/I. Knight

10 Village organisations

- **Watton Youth Drop Inn** - Mr. Poulton said that the Watton Youth Drop Inn are still experiencing a shortage of volunteers to run the club.
- **Watton-at-Stone School Governors**: Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Watch**: Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association**: Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone War Memorial Hall Management Committee** - Mr. Stock again said that affairs of the War Memorial Hall are being very well-run by the Management Committee and it continues to be a pleasure to attend their meetings. There were no problems to report and everything appears to be running smoothly.
- **Watton-at-Stone Pre-School Playgroup**: Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Scout & Guide Group**
Mr. Poulton said that the Scout and Guide Group would be holding its AGM on Wednesday 25th April at 7.30 in the Scout Hut.
- **Watton-at-Stone Sports & Social Club**
Ms. Waltham said that the next meeting of the Sports and Social Club is on Tuesday 27th March.
- **Police Authority**
Mrs. McCash said she would be attending the Hertfordshire Policing Plan launch on Tuesday 3rd April 2012.

Action: H. McCash

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

11 Items for Parish News

There were two items identified for inclusion in the April 2012 issue of the Parish News.

- Toilet change of use
- Barratt Homes Sponsorship

Action: J. Allsop

- **The meeting closed at 2145.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 20th March 2012.**