

## Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2012

Present:	Mr. Michael Smith (Chairman)	Mr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman)
	Mrs. Christine Dinnin	Mr. Denis Filer
	Mr. Iain Harris	Mr. Ian Knight
	Mrs. Helen McCash	Mr. Nigel Poulton
	Mr. David Stock	The Clerk (Mrs. Jane Allsop)

### 1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence from Ms. Emma Waltham.

### 2 Public Participation

None

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

Mr. Smith had two additional items.

- **Stop Stansted expansion – request for financial support.**

It is not the Parish Councils policy to give financial support to organisations outside the village.

- **E-mail re Empowering Town and Parish Councils**

It was agreed to write to Oliver Heald as follows.

‘The Parish Council are very concerned about the ongoing delays to the required Sustainable Communities Act regulations.

As you are aware, these regulations are needed in order to give Town and Parish Councils the legal right to use the ‘bottom-up’ process of the Act to help local shops, services and communities.

Could you please write to the Communities Minister, Greg Clark, urging him to make the Sustainable Communities Act regulations urgently.

With many thanks for your support in this matter.’

The Clerk to write accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Poulton to hand-deliver the letter at Oliver Heald’s surgery on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> April at the Community Hall.

**Action: N. Poulton**

### 4 Declaration of Interests

Mr. Smith declared a pecuniary interest in item 8 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee - Sportsfield maintenance (Mr. Smith’s company, Blue Bury Contractors, have been contracted to do the maintenance work).

### 5 Minutes of the last meeting

#### a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

Mr. Filer 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

- **Inspect drain in Perrywood Lane on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> March to see if it has been cleared**

Mr. Filer said he inspected the drain and e-mailed the Clerk on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March as follows.

‘The drains in Perrywood Lane were cleared on Thursday. Marita Morrissey has phoned to say thanks to the Parish Council.’

- **Inform Mr. Filer of any projects not already included on the New Homes bonus funding list**

Refer to item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee – New Homes bonus.

- **Arrange for Jim Morrissey to do the internal audit of the Parish Council accounts**

The Clerk will take the Parish Council accounts to Jim Morrissey for auditing on either Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> April or Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> April.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Arrange for McCash and Hay to audit the Community Hall accounts**

The Clerk said that she had not yet arranged a date with McCash and Hay for the auditing of the Community Hall accounts.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Write to Michelle Hart re location of bench she donated in memory of her husband**

Refer to item 8 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee – Bench seat under Oak tree on sportsfield.

- **Repair chain-link fencing on the sportsfield side of the MPPA**

Mr. Poulton said that he and Mr. Meischke inspected the MPPA chain-link fencing during their 6-monthly check of the MPPA. They found that the chain-link fencing was coming away in several places and urgently needed attention. Mr. Poulton obtained permission from Parish Councillors via e-mail to instruct Adrian Thompson to do the work as soon as possible. This work has now been completed.

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

None.

**d) Action points resolved**

1. Give Ms. Waltham e-mail to PC Andy Woodward re traffic problem at Great Innings North
2. E-mail PC Andy Woodward
3. Chase Network Rail asking them to clear the rubbish in Perrywood Lane
4. Arrange meeting with Mark from James Turner Limited
5. Purchase music licence from PRS Music
6. Send letter to Chief Inspector McDonald
7. Print off copy of plans for 7 Rivershill and give them to Mr. Knight
8. Deal with the planning application for 7 Rivershill
9. Liaise with Barratt Homes re the flattening of the former bike ramp area of the Lammas
10. Write letter to EHC re petition for Great Innings Play area and pass to Mr. Poulton
11. Hand deliver letter and petitions to Jonathan Hart at East Herts Council
12. Sign allotment lease and arrange for it to be witnessed
13. Return signed allotment lease to Debenhams Ottaway
14. Write to all allotment holders re Veolia temporary hosepipe ban
15. Hand-deliver allotment letters in the village
16. Laminate a copy of Veolia's 'Notice of temporary ban on water use'
17. Put up laminated 'Notice of temporary ban on water use' on the allotment notice board
18. Draw up projects identified for financial support from the New Homes Bonus funds
19. Compare draft Standing Orders with modified NALC version and modify as required
20. Read draft Standing Orders and send any corrections to the Clerk
21. Renew Community Hall insurance policy
22. Send a copy of the Community Hall insurance documents to all Parish Councillors
23. Meet on site at the sportsfield to discuss what maintenance works need to be done
24. Submit new application for tree works on the Oak tree to East Herts Council
25. Discuss relocation of bench under Oak tree on sportsfield
26. Contact Groundwork Trust re flattening of bike ramp area
27. Write to Mrs. Michelle Wakefield re request for a grant for her daughter Holly
 

Mr. Harris proposed that because the law does not contain any provision for making grants to individuals, the Parish Council resolves that should any further applications be received they are automatically rejected by the Clerk on behalf of the Pettish Council and do not have to be brought to its attention. Mr. Meischke seconded the proposal and all present were in favour.'
28. Raise issue of more effecting heating for War Memorial Hall with their committee
29. Write article for Parish News

## 6 Planning

### a) Applications

#### i) 7 Rivershill (3/12/0323/FP)

Two storey and single storey front extensions. Rear canopy.

Mr. Harris e-mailed all Parish Councillors on 27<sup>th</sup> March as follows.

‘Ian Knight has consulted widely with the residents in relation to the planning application for 7 Rivershill.

The generally expressed view is that the proposed extension is out of character with the street and both inappropriate and an overdevelopment.

Under the protocol this should be referred to our meeting on 17 April for debate. That would require the [planning authority to extend the time for consultation from the existing date of 4 April.

Iain as planning coordinator has suggested that provided a majority of councillors so agree we should write to the authority as follows:

We have considered the planning application for 7 Rivershill and have reviewed the plans with care and consulted under our protocol, the view of the parish council is that the proposed development is not appropriate. It is out of character with the other houses in the street and would constitute an overdevelopment.

Please let me know if you are agreeable to this approach so Jane can proceed accordingly.’

Following approval from Parish Councillors, the Clerk e-mailed East Herts Council accordingly.

### b) Decisions

#### i) 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.

-East Herts Council permission granted

#### ii) 3, White House Close (3/12/0208/FP)

Two storey side and single store rear extensions (amended scheme)

-East Herts Council permission granted

## 7 Specific items

### a) Queen’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations - update

Mr. Meischke said that the next meeting of the Queens Diamond Jubilee Celebration committee is on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> April. The preparations for the jubilee village picnic are going well. Quite a lot of different musicians have been booked to play in 15-minute slots during the event.

### b) Standing Orders

Mr. Filer said that there were a number of typing errors that both he and Mr. Poulton identified when reading the draft Standing Orders. These have now been corrected but he asked questions on various items contained in revised draft Standing Orders document and the following was agreed by Parish Councillors.

Items to remain in the Standing Orders

- 1 x, “Meetings shall not exceed a period of 3 hours”.  
Mr. Harris said that it is good practise to have a time limit for meetings. If a meeting should exceed three hours the Parish Council can suspend Standing Orders under item 1 xxiii “To suspend any Standing Order except those which are mandatory by law”.
- 6 b, Rules of debate - “Subject to Standing Orders 4(a)-(e) above, a motion shall not be considered unless it has been proposed and seconded.”

Items be deleted under item 6 – Rules of Debate.

- Pursuant to Standing Order 6(h) above, the number of amendments to an original or substantive motion, which may be moved by a Councillor, is limited to one.
- Subject to Standing Order 6(m) and (n) above, a Councillor may not speak further in respect of any one motion except to speak once on an amendment moved by another Councillor or to make a point of order or to give a personal explanation.
- During the debate of a motion, a Councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the Councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A Councillor raising a point of order shall identify the Standing Order which he considers has been breached or specify the irregularity in the meeting he is concerned by.

Parish Councillors to note that all items highlighted in bold cannot be deleted. Therefore item 7c is required to remain in the Standing Orders.

'7 c, Councillors with a prejudicial interest in relation to any item of business being transacted at a meeting may (i) make presentations, (ii) answer questions and (iii) give evidence relating to the business being transacted but must, thereafter, leave the room or chamber.'

Mr. Filer said that in the draft Standing Orders there is reference throughout to 'he' but no reference to 'she'. Mr. Harris said that as a matter of law under the Interpretation Act 1889 any reference to 'he' was taken to include a reference to 'she'.

Mr. Smith proposed that the following text be added on page 1 of the Standing Orders.

'The overriding objectives of the Standing Orders are as follows.

- Courtesy is required at all times.
- Discussion of other members' motives is never allowed.
- No one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once.'

All Parish Councillors present at the meeting were in agreement.

The Clerk to amend the Standing Orders and e-mail the 2<sup>nd</sup> revised draft edition to all Parish Councillors.

**Action: J. Allsop**

### **c) Report on Policing Launch held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2012**

Mr Filer reported that he had attended the launch of the Hertfordshire Policing Plan 2012 at Police Headquarters on 3 April 2012.

He reported that statistics given indicated a successful past year for Hertfordshire Police in that compared with the previous year detection of crime increased by 6.2% (detection now 35%), burglary had fallen by 19% (771 fewer burglaries), and ASBO's were down by 19%.

It was emphasised that Hertfordshire Police Force was one of the best in the country.

The authority was required to save £15m - £20m per annum by 2015 with £9m to be saved this year, and there had been a freeze on the police precept requirement for the last two years. In response to questioning, the authority claimed that savings in manpower would not affect 'front line staff' but would be basically confined to 'back office staff'. This claim was greeted with some scepticism.

A number of presentations were made by serving officers and ACC Alison Roome-Gifford indicated the Policing Challenges for 2012 including:-

- The Queens Jubilee
- Euro 2012 and UEFA 11 June to 11 July
- HM Royal visit to Hertfordshire on 14 June 2012
- Red Hot Chili Peppers at Knebworth on 23 June (80,000+)
- Olympic Torch through Hertfordshire 7/8 July
- Rhythms of the World at Hitchin 14 & 15 July
- Olympics 2012--Terrorist Activity/Criminal Activity
- Lady Godiva 33ft high statue puppet through Hatfield 3 Aug
- Plus normal policing of crime prevention and detection.

This would be the last Policing Authority Plan pending the election/appointment of a Police Commissioner later in the year.

Mrs. McCash thanked Mr. Filer for attending the Policing Launch on her behalf.

Mr. Poulton said that the election of a Police commissioner will benefit the Community Hall because the Pavilion will be used as a polling station.

It was agreed to invite PC Andy Woodward to the June Parish Council meeting requesting that he give the Parish Council an update on policing in our area.

**Action: J. Allsop**

### **d) Disposal of leaf collection by East Herts Council**

Mr. Poulton said that East Herts Council are no longer willing to pay for the disposal of leaves. If the Parish Council want leaves removed the cost will be £120 per collection because the leaves will need to be taken to the Westmill landfill site and cannot be recycled as there could be non-recyclable material with the leaf collections.

Currently Mr. and Mrs. Moore (2 Rivershill) are allowing Adam Welch to throw the leaves he collects over the brick wall adjacent to their property and they turn it into compost.

It was agreed to decline East Herts Council offer to dispose of the leaves and if in the future Mr. and Mrs. Moore are no longer willing to dispose of the leaves, contractors to be asked to quote for clearance and disposal of the leaves. Mr. Poulton to notify East Herts Council accordingly.

**Action: N. Poulton**

## 8 Reports

### a) Sub-Committees

#### Budget & Finance

Mr. Filer reported on the following items.

- **Monthly accounts**

<b>Watton-at-Stone Parish Council</b>	
<b>Petty Cash – Receipts</b>	<b>Petty cash - Payments</b>
None	None
<b>Cheques issued</b>	
Post Office	Tax and NI for April, May, June 2011 276.12
Debenhams Ottaway	Legal fees for drawing up new Allotment lease 1,080.00
Michael Smith	Deposit re DG Professional Music re Jubilee picnic 300.00
St. Albans Diocesan Board	Sportsfield extension rent 90.00
Frank Cooper & Son Ltd	Grass cutting in March 2012 61.20
Blue Bury Contractors	Square metal post inserts for goal posts 24.00
Wages, salaries & allowances	April 2012 1040.89
J. Allsop	Phone charges to 05/04/2011 21.90
	<b><u>2,894.11</u></b>

#### **Cheques received**

None

<b>Watton-at-Stone Community Hall</b>	
<b>Petty Cash – Receipts</b>	<b>Petty Cash -Payments</b>
Sharon Ling – Pavilion	24.00
Jim Keen – Main Hall – February & March	180.00
Floodlighting to 16.04.12	120.00
Steve Haylock – Main Hall & Pavilion	<u>45.00</u>
	<b><u>369.00</u></b>

#### **Cheques issued**

D. P Electrics	Replace faulty tubes and starter 78.00
John Phillips	Toilet opening from 03.01.12 to 31.03.12 81.00
Wages	April 2012 336.60
Norris & Fisher Insurance Brokers Ltd	Annual insurance 1165.17
P R S for Music	Music licenses 153.25
H B Thompson	6 hours cleaning 45.90
Hertfordshire County Council	Cleaning materials 57.48
Jane Allsop for Laidlaw	3 keys for hirer 65.08
	<b><u>1936.58</u></b>

#### **Cheques received**

Mrs. Tanner (Victoria Preuff)	Main Hall and Pavilion 48.00
Mrs. Wakefield	Pavilion 7.00
Shotokan Karate	Main Hall 144.00
Badminton Club	Main Hall 135.00
Mr. Stringer	Donation towards keys 54.23
Mr. Stringer	Main Hall hire 277.20
Conservative Association	Pavilion hire 24.00
Mrs. Stickbury	Main Hall and Pavilion 42.00
Watton Youth Drop Inn	Main Hall and Pavilion 279.90
	<b><u>1041.33</u></b>

Parish Councillors approved the above payments.

- **Parish Council and Community Hall 12-monthly statement of accounts for the year ended 2011/12**

Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of the Parish Council and Community Hall statement of accounts for the year ending the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012.

Mr. Filer went through the expenditure and income items for both the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts and explained the variations in the statements.

All the bank statements for the Parish Council accounts have been received, however the Community Hall's COIF bank statement has not and therefore the final quarters interest is not showing on the 12-month statement of accounts.

After discussion, it was agreed to debate the level of funds held in reserve in the Community Hall accounts and the list of long-term projects at the June Parish Council meeting. **Agenda 06/12**

- **Summary of 12-monthly statement of accounts for the year ended 2011/12**

All Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of the summary 12-monthly statement of accounts.

Mr. Filer said that the Parish Council 12-monthly statement is complete. It was agreed that the item 'Administration' should be changed to 'Salaries, fees and other administration costs'.

The Community Hall summary 12-monthly statement of accounts requires the addition of the COIF interest for the period ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012.

The Clerk to amend the 12-month statement of accounts and add the COIF bank interest. The revised accounts to be e-mailed to all Parish Councillors.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **BDO re Annual Return of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012**

BDO LLP wrote on 26<sup>th</sup> March informing us of the details for the annual audit for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012. The public inspection period starts on 30<sup>th</sup> April and ends on 28<sup>th</sup> May (a notice advertising the inspection period is currently displayed on the Parish Council notice board), the completed Annual Return and all relevant documentation needs to be sent to BDO Stoy Hayward LLP by 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **CPRE – Membership renewal**

The annual CPRE subscription for 2012/13 is £29 (the same as for 2009/10 and 2010/11).

It was agreed to renew this membership.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **New Homes Bonus**

Mr. Filer said that all Parish Councillors were e-mailed the following list of projects to be funded from the New Homes Bonus, which are listed in no particular order.

Items	Approximate cost
New Tennis court	£35,000
Planting of Oak trees	£1,000
Bus Shelters	No cost yet
Extra Playground Equipment	No cost yet
Great Innings Playground Gates	£2,170
Replacement of Sports Hall Floor	£7,500
Additional Storage in Community Hall	No cost yet
Double Glazed Windows-Memorial Hall	No cost yet
New Emergency Doors-Memorial Hall	No cost yet

Mrs. Dinnin asked Mr. Filer to include the regeneration of the bike ramp area on this list.

**Action: D. Filer**

## Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Poulton reported on the following item.

- **Minutes and report on Trustees meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2012**

The Trustees accepted the minutes, which were then signed by the Chairman as a true record.

- **New flooring for the sports hall**

Mr. Poulton has received a verbal estimate of £7500 for replacing the sports hall flooring with a multi-use flooring that allows the use of tables and chairs on it as well as ladies high heeled shoes.

The existing floor has been down for 16 years and restricts the hiring use of the sports hall. Over the years many potential bookings have been lost.

Mr. Stock said that the option of temporary flooring laid down on top of the existing flooring was considered, but this is costly and the Community Hall currently has no storage for the flooring panels.

- **Storage and pram extension for the Community Hall**

Mr. Poulton said he had met with Trevor Blacktin, who was involved with the original building of the Community Hall, to discuss the building of an additional storage room and pram-store. However, he had not yet received an estimate for how much the work will cost.



After discussion, Parish Council agreed that the bench should be temporarily removed and stored in the former outside gents toilet. When the work to the Oak tree has been completed, the bench will be reinstated or relocated as appropriate.

Mr. Poulton to ask Adrian Thompson to remove the bench.

**Action: N. Poulton**

The Clerk to write to Michelle Hart to inform her about the action the Parish Council is taking.

**Action: J. Allsop**

### **Environment Sub-Committee**

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Oak tree on sportsfield**

East Herts Council have granted permission for the Oak tree on the Sportsfield to have the following work carried out.

15% crown reduction by radius plus deadwood plus bracing.

Parish Councillors agreed to accept C-Trees quotation for the above work.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Groundwork Trust**

Barratt Homes have flattened the earth bike ramps on the Lammas, levelling the area.

Mrs. Dinnin said that she had been trying to make contact with Groundwork Trust to arrange a site visit of the former bike ramp area. She said she was also waiting for a LEAF grant application form from East Herts Council

### **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 today.

One of the lighting tubes in the Pavilion is out. Mr. Poulton said he had removed the broken tube and now needed to purchase and fit a new one.

**Action: N. Poulton**

#### **ii) Monthly village-report**

Mr. Meischke completed the report on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> April.

- **Safety surface** – the safety surface under the Rainbow Multi-play orange ladder is cracked.

The repair of the safety surface to be discussed in conjunction with additional play equipment for this area.

- **See-saw** – is squeaking.

- **Community Hall – external woodwork** Bob Adams is scheduled to do this work during the summer.

- **Community Hall roof vent** – City Roofing Limited have been unable to obtain a replacement roof vent but have made repairs to the opening so that it works like a vent.

- **Damage to car park wall** – the damaged pillar has been repaired by Adrian Thompson.

- **External cupboard** – the Football Club have made a disgusting mess of the external cupboard. Parish Councillors debated the problem but no decision on how it should be managed was made.

- **MPPA** – The chain-link fencing and post rails have now been repaired by Adrian Thompson.

**Salt bins** – Mr. Poulton said that it is unlikely that the Parish Council will be able to purchase any salt bins for the village because Hertfordshire Highways are not willing to fill additional bins and the Parish Council has nowhere to store the salt required to fill them.

**War Memorial Garden** – there is a dead bush at the back of the War Memorial, which was most probably a bay tree. Mrs. Dinnin to talk to Watton Nursery about a replacement planting.

**Action: C. Dinnin**

#### **iii) Weekly sportsfield-report and action**

Ted Brown has been instructed to kill the weeds around the Community Hall.

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

- **MPPA** – the kicker boards need re-screwing.

- **Benches** – several of the benches in the village painted by Glaxo volunteers last year need re-varnishing.

Adrian Thompson to be asked to supply a quotation to do this work.

**Action: N. Poulton**

The Clerk to e-mail Mr. Poulton a copy of the section of the 6-monthly report relating to the benches.

**Action: J. Allsop**

The Bob Ansell Memorial seat is in need of repair or removing. The Clerk to write to Brian Ansell accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Children's play area safety surface** – repair of the cracked surface by the multi-play orange ladder will be deferred until a later date.
- **First Aid box** – The first aid box in the kitchen is out of date and needs replacing. **Action: J. Allsop**

v) **Website**

None

vi) **Website diary**

None.

## 9 Correspondence received

### a) **River Beane Restoration Association**

All Parish Councillors have been copied with a letter (dated 20<sup>th</sup> March) to Oliver Heald MP from Mr. Knight, in his capacity as Secretary of the River Beane Restoration Association.

Mr. Knight highlighted the main points contained in this letter.

Mr. Knight said that the East Herts planners do not seem to consider the important link between where there is water in the county in relation to possible building sites. Mr. Poulton said that there are no specific sites have been identified for building in East Herts.

### b) **Hertfordshire County Council re Hertfordshire's draft rural transport strategy consultation**

Mr. Smith said that he had looked at the draft Rural Transport Strategy Consultation on-line. He said the consultation document is lengthy and will be time consuming to complete. It was agreed not to respond to this consultation.

### c) **Bidwells re property management for The Diocese of St. Albans**

Mr. T. A. Startkey (Partner at Bidwells LLP) wrote on 26<sup>th</sup> March to advise that, as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012, Bidwells LLP will be taking over as property managers of the Diocese of St. Albans.

### d) **Network Rail re rubbish in Perrywood Lane**

Network rails wrote on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April confirming receipt of our letter requesting they clear the rubbish left by Network Rail maintenance workers.

Mr. Filer said that as far as he was aware the rubbish had not been removed. He agreed to inspect the site and e-mail his findings to the Clerk.

**Action: D. Filer**

It was agreed that if the rubbish has not been cleared, we write again to Network Rail giving them 30 days to clear the rubbish otherwise the Parish Council will arrange for it to be cleared and invoice Network Rail accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

### e) **Jonathan Hart re Great Innings Play area**

Jonathan Hart forwarded the petition, hand delivered to him by Mr. Poulton, requesting the installation of gates on the Great Innings Play area to Ian Sharratt (Environment Manger, Open Spaces, East Herts Council).

Ian Sharratt e-mailed the Clerk on 12<sup>th</sup> April as follows.

'Thank you for your letter and attached petition of 29th March passed to me by Jon Hart.

I am pleased to confirm that we would be happy to go ahead with a project to install some form of gate at this site as you have requested. I must advise though that this is not an improvement we believe is necessary in relation to the health and safety concerns you have discussed with us. We would be prepared to organise the work required but would ask that you fully fund this. I would like to explain in more detail our decision in considering your request and provide you our thoughts on how we might proceed. I have prepared some notes below including some estimated costs.

You have confirmed your willingness to pay for the purchase of gates. I would be grateful if you could now confirm that you are also prepared to fund the installation and to advise which solution you favour.

In summary, the play area has dog grids that larger dogs seem to be able to walk across. Our assertion however is that these dogs are accompanied by their owners. Gates would not therefore prevent this activity. The two entrances do not face directly onto the road. Our view is that the fence around the play area provides a safe barrier between the adjacent road and the play area but that gates are not needed. The play area has not had gates for many years and has been assessed by ourselves and our independent annual inspectors. It is better to spend limited resources on installing more play equipment to improve the play

experience across the district than to install gates and fences unless they are specifically recommended by our advisors.

Thank you for your interest in this play area and for bringing your concerns to our attention. I look forward to your response. If you would like to go ahead I will arrange for a firm price and advise when the gates could be installed. There is normally a 6 to 8 week delivery period from placing an order.'

After lengthy discussion, Parish Councillors agreed to pay for the purchase of two gates on the Great Innings play area and the installation costs.

The Clerk to e-mail Ian Sharratt accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

It was questioned why there are two entrances to the play area. Mr. Meischke said that Jonathan Hart had informed him, at the site meeting, that the reason there are two gates is to allow anyone being bullied or harassed to have another escape route.

## 10 Village organisations

- **Watton Youth Drop Inn**

Mr. Poulton said that the Watton Youth Drop Inn held its AGM on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> April at 1930.

Three new volunteers have been enlisted; however, more recruits are still required to reduce the work load of each volunteer. Financially the clubs funds are low, however recently tuck sales have increased which is probably due to the Londis supermarket closing at 1900, which is earlier than its predecessor. Mr. Poulton and Mr. Meischke said that there is also less rubbish around the Community Hall and sportsfield area because the supermarket closes earlier.

- **Watton-at-Stone School Governors**

Mr. Poulton said that the current Headmistress would be leaving Watton School at the end of the summer term.

Now that Charles Clark is no longer a Parish Councillors, the Parish Council is not receiving any news reports from the School Governors. It was agreed to write to the Headmistress requesting regular news updates.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **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 said he would be attending the next meeting of the War Memorial Hall management Committee on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> April at 1100.

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

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

Mr. Poulton said he would be attending the Scout and Guide Group AGM on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> April at 1930 in the Scout Hut.

- **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 is trying to increase its exposure to the general public, schools etc.

## 11 Items for Parish News

There was one item identified for inclusion in the May 2012 issue of the Parish News.

- Annual parish meeting and annual meeting

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **The meeting closed at 2118.**

- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2012.**