

MINUTES

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Woodham Walter Parish Council.
Held at 7.00pm using Virtual technology hosted by Zoom.

Monday 11th January 2021

Present:

Cllr. John Tompkins (Chairman)
Cllr. John Brown
Cllr. James Bunn
Cllr. Jenny Hughes
Cllr. James Rushton
Cllr. Joanna Symons
Cllr. Peter Warren

Others: Jacky Bannerman (Parish Clerk)
District Councillor Karl Jarvis

Public: 10 including representatives from Woodham Walter Primary School and Tadpoles Nursery.

2420. Welcome Cllr. John Tompkins welcomed those present to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. The Clerk notified that the meeting would be recorded for the purposes of minute taking and explained the procedure for the public present.

2421. Apologies For Absence Received and accepted from County Councillor Penny Channer and District Councillor Mark Durham.

2422. Disclosure of Interests/Consideration of Dispensations To disclose the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, other Pecuniary Interests or Non-Pecuniary Interests relating to items of business on the agenda having regard to paragraphs 6-10 inclusive of the Code of Conduct for Members. (Members are reminded they are also required to disclose any such interests as soon as they become aware should the need arise throughout the meeting).

Cllr. Joanna Symons declared a non-pecuniary interest in the 20/01284/PIP application as she is personal friends with applicant, and the Parish Council representative on the Governing body of Woodham Walter Primary School which is adjacent to the site.

Cllr. Jenny Hughes declared a non-pecuniary interest in the 20/01284/PIP application as she is a close neighbour of the application site.

As previously reported re: Warren Golf Club, Cllr. James Rushton has declared a non-pecuniary interest as his wife is a member at Warren Active and Cllr. Joanna Symons has declared non-pecuniary interest in the Warren Golf Club as she is a member at Warren Active.

Cllr. Jenny Hughes declared a non-pecuniary interest in discussion regarding hedge works at Blue Mill Lane because her husband had been involved. Cllr. John Brown declared a non-pecuniary interest in discussion regarding hedge works at Blue Mill Lane because he had instructed the same contractor to cut his hedge.

2423. Public Forum

There were 7 members of the public present at the start of the meeting. Another 3 joined during the meeting. Not all remained in the meeting for the duration of the meeting. The following is a summary of the comments made.

- There are benefits for Tadpoles Nursery. The parking provision will relieve the parking on the Street. Understands that land will be allocated to increase the size of the Tadpoles Nursery outside space. Hopes that the houses will result in new families attending the nursery. Tadpoles are excited about the project.
- Concern about the parking especially at drop off and collection times. This will create a blind crossroads at the centre of the village including additional pollution. The site lines are not good enough. Traffic signals would be required and a pelican crossing.

- Statement from the school that they will consider the application at a Full Governing Body meeting later this week to consider the merits of the application solely as far as the school is concerned and the impact on the school. Planning statement outlines a number of potential benefits for the school including an extension of the playing field and improvements for school car parking and the new homes could bring children to the village which would also benefit the school.
- Concern that the access is directly next to the Nursery and School. Traffic will increase. The village can be gridlocked during drop off and pick-up times. Noise will increase.
- In attendance to receive an update regarding the drainage and ditch problems at Blue Mill Lane. The hedge has been cut back but the branches have been left in the ditch. It is understood that these will be cleared in the coming days.

2424. To approve the minutes of Virtual Ordinary Parish Council meeting held on Monday 14th December 2020. The minutes were approved as a true record of the meeting.

2425. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

2426. Planning – APPLICATIONS

2426.1 20/01276/HOUSE Spring Elms Farm, Spring Elms Lane

Two storey side extension to be used as annexe, construction of detached garage, extended and alter drive and vehicular and pedestrian accesses.

Councillors resolved to recommend refusal of the application because the garage is too close to the boundary given the nature of the site and the local environment.

2426.2 20/01230/FUL Oak Farm, Oak Farm Road

New three bedroom dwelling in accordance with Planning Permission ref: 65/00293/FUL with slight increase in footprint.

After an appraisal of the planning history that affects both the application and the adjoining sites together with the current application and planning considerations, Councillors resolved to recommend refusal of the application on the basis that it is outside the defined settlement area, the design is inappropriate and detrimental to the intrinsic character of the landscape.

2426.3 20/01284/PIP Land South of WW Primary School

Up to 9 discounted market dwellings, enabling extension of school playing fields and car park.

It was noted that a number of comments had been received from residents as well as the comments made during the public forum. There was also a statement received from the applicant which was read out.

- Applicant statement summarised as follows: Farm has been in the family for several generations with 3 generations currently working together. They farm their land, not sell it. This proposal is to provide affordable housing for families who can then support school, local pubs and enjoy the village. Local intake to school will reduce cars from outside village. the application addresses current parking problems by gifting land to enable a new car park and land to extend school playground. Houses would be discounted to meet local housing need to meet the policy exception of building out of the settlement boundary. As farm machinery gets bigger this smaller field becomes less viable to farm. The field does not flood it is only the lower margins of the field that are affected when the stream floods and this is not the area for the proposed development. Believe this is a positive step for Woodham Walter.

Councillors have understood that the scope of the Planning in Principle application is limited to the principle relative to the proposed location, land use and the amount of development of the area of the land outlined in red on the site plan. Without any technical information it is difficult to conduct a meaningful consultation.

Statutory consultees are able to remind the LPA of their standard recommendations and although this Parish Council is not a statutory consultee, as the Village Design Statement has been adopted by Maldon District Council as a material consideration in all Village planning matters, we wish to bring this together with the Conservation Area documentation to the LPA's attention.

The site lies outside of the Village Defined Settlement Area and does not just lie adjacent to the Conservation Area but includes a portion of it with a number of significant trees, a building identified as being of local heritage interest to the Village, a K9 telephone kiosk all in very close proximity. The balance of the site is designated as agricultural land.

The description of the site location is inaccurate and misleading. It is located in the core of the Village and not to the south of the core as stated in the planning statement. As such, it plays a very important visual role in the intrinsic character, beauty and appearance of the area as well as from the Village high point at the Church and south end of the Village, Bell Meadow. Its visual loss would be a grave adverse impact and be detrimental and instrumental in destroying the character of the Village.

The red line indicating the application extent is a small part of the overall site and encompasses the site access point from The Street. The blue line encloses the balance of the existing field but does not encompass the Old Chapel (Pre-School building) that is also in the same ownership but not outlined in blue. The site plan does not therefore give an accurate indication of ownership or influence.

The site access area is taken from The Street at the point of its junction with Top Road. Notwithstanding the lack of detail, at this point The Street is a busy road with through traffic accessing Hatfield Peverel and the A12 North as well as northern parts of the Village and from Top Road. The junction is particularly dangerous because of the existing lack of forward visibility. Intensification of traffic use in this area by the proposed number of additional dwellings, linked with the School and the Pre-School accesses would be dangerous.

The planning statement indicates that the application will include enabling works to the school but neither the School nor the Old Chapel are included within the application site and are therefore not assessed in this consultation. In a written statement given during the Council meeting and minuted, the applicant stated that part of the application includes the gifting of land (not a planning issue) for the provision of additional playing field, playground and parking facilities for the school, but this is not included within the application or the red line, nor is there a 'change of use application' in substantiation and therefore in the view of this Council cannot be considered as 'enabling' nor is the school outlined in red and therefore not considered.

The proposed extent of development does not appear to be based on a thorough housing needs survey. Such a survey would have indicated that Woodham Walter is designated as a Smaller Village (LDP S8), being a defined settlement containing few or no services and facilities, with limited access to public transport and very limited or no employment opportunities. There are currently 10 small housing units already approved in the Village at the Oak Farm Road/London Road Junction, Lodge Farm, Curling Tye Lane, West Bowers Farm and Church Corner that satisfies the perceived housing need.

The site is located in a rural area where development should only be supported in specific circumstances. Insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that there is either a justifiable and particularly a functional need or that the proposal would support the viability of an existing local business contrary to the Maldon District Local Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

The diminution of the field outlined in blue by the red outlined application area would make the field agriculturally uneconomic and difficult to manage with modern machinery or even land locked.

After considering in detail the facts of the PIP application councillors resolved to recommend refusal as follows:

- a. The principle of a major site access taken from The Street at an already busy and dangerous junction is unsustainable on safety, pollution and traffic management grounds (LDP T2).
- b. The principle of the proposed development, by reason of its location and the resultant intensification of residential development would substantially alter the intrinsic character of the area and

have an unacceptable visual impact on the countryside through the loss of agricultural land and the urbanisation and domestication of the site contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework's "presumption of sustainable development". The poor sustainability credentials of the site and its locality would significantly and demonstrably outweigh any benefits of the proposal when assessed against the compliant policies of the Maldon District Local Development Plan including policies S1, S8, D1 and H4 and Government advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

c. The site is located in a rural area where development should only be supported in specific circumstances. Insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that there is either a justifiable and functional need or that the proposal would support the viability of an existing local business contrary to policies S1, S8, E4 and D1 of the of the Maldon District Local Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

2427. Planning – DECISIONS

2427.1 20/01056/COUPA Barn at West Bowers Farm, West Bowers Road APPROVE
Change of use of Agricultural Building to dwelling house (Class C3) and for building operations reasonably necessary for the conversion.

2428. Other Planning Matters

2428.1 Warren Golf Club Application 20/00519

- i. The Warren application committee date is yet to be confirmed. The next meeting of the NW Area planning committee is 10th February.

2428.2 Enforcement – To advise on any updates

- i. Oak Farm – No further updates or works noted since Temporary Stop Notice was issued. Planning application received and discussed
- ii. Warren Estate – no further updates received from MDC. No direct response to letter regarding lockdown. Cllr. Jarvis shared information regarding holiday parks generally which indicates that MDC are not going to enforce any conditions at Holiday Parks during the lockdown period. Official closure period for the Warren Lodges as per condition in Planning approval is from 15-28th January will therefore not be enforced.

2428.3 Double Decker Bus at school – There remains uncertainty in this matter. The school have been liaising with MDC and their solicitor. It was suggested that they seek the opinion of Planning at Essex County Council.

2429. Reports Of the County/District Councillor's

It is noted that Cllr. Channer has submitted various documents and updates which are shared with Councillors and via village emails as appropriate.

Cllr. Jarvis reported

- i. MDC 2019/2020 accounts have been signed off. They are negotiating the proposed fees for 2020/2021. It is the 2020/2021 accounts that will be most impacted by Covid related issues.
- ii. Budget 2021/2022 – towards the end of January the Strategy and Resources committee will make recommendations for Council consideration 23rd February. There is a focus on prudence (for example minimum capital expenditure) as Covid has made a significant impact on Council Income (carparking fees and other estate fees), plus it is incurring additional costs (for example Leisure Centre contractual obligations and Covid measures). Some central governments measures are being made available to assist in the budget, but a material hit on reserves is still inevitable. The Council is introducing min-budgets so that matters can be reviewed on a more regular basis.
- iii. Capital expenditure – while much is on hold through 106 agreements already completed funds have been made available to deliver a new Maldon Promenade Garden.
- iv. Leisure Centres (Blackwater and Dengie 100 sports centres, run by Places Leisure) – Both centres are now closed again under the new Lockdown measures. Ongoing support and closure options are under regular review.
- v. Covid-19 High Street Recovery Plan/ MDC offices
- vi. Vaccination centre – MDC offices have been transformed to provide this service.
- vii. Grants available – business grants – new sets published each change in lockdown - apply online.

- viii. Bradwell B Consultation – an appeal has been lodged by the applicant regarding MDC’s refusal to grant application for ground-testing sites.

Clerk asked about grants for Parish Councils to help with additional expenditure/reduced income due to COVID. There is currently no funding available to small Parishes who do not have rateable buildings. Cllr. Jarvis suggested clerk write to Director of Resources, Chris Leslie and Cllr. Richard Siddal who a responsible for setting budgets and finances at MDC and ask if they can apply for a Government Grant.

2430. Financial Matters

2430.1 Summary of Accounts to date.

DATE	ACCOUNT / TRANSACTION DETAIL	AMOUNT IN	AMOUNT OUT	BALANCE
Business Reserve A/C				
14-Dec-20	Balance			48386.16
11-Jan-20	Transferred to Community Account		1000.00	47386.16
Community Account				
14-Dec-20	Balance			555.46
11-Jan-21	Donation (Playground)	500.00		1055.46
11-Jan-21	Transfer from Business Reserve	1000.00		2055.46
11-Jan-21	January Debits		1411.27	644.19

2430.2 Review of Bank Statements and Account sheets. Councillor Brown confirmed that they have reviewed the Bank and Credit Card Statements and Account sheets for December and found them to be reconciled correctly.

2430.3 Min Ref: 2376.5 Banking Mandate. Clerk has chased this up again and another form has been duly completed and sent.

2430.4 Asset Register/Inspection. Clerk has carried out a full asset inspection. Councillors considered and accepted the report and recommendations.

2430.5 It was noted that a £500 donation was received towards the Playground Fund which now stands at £26,109 (Plus £1000 to be reclaimed from Locality Fund for picnic benches).

2430.6 Budget 2021/22. Councillors discussed budget considerations and precept request. Considering expenditure (including regular payments plus sums for maintenance as per asset inspection, street light upgrade, playground expenditure, contingency for possible devolution of the Public Rights of Way maintenance, Microsoft 365 subscriptions to enable Clerk and Councillors to carry out functions of the council as well as taking into account COVID impacts such as staff hours and reduced income because the Party Tents cannot currently be rented) councillors agreed that the precept should be increased by 5% in order to meet all council spending commitments and to enable reserves of £15,000.

Cllr. James Rushton proposed and Cllr. James Bunn seconded that the precept for 2021/22 be increased by 5% to a figure of £24,035 (equivalent to an annual Band D amount of £87.34, an increase of £4.99). This proposal was agreed by all Councillors. Clerk to issue paperwork to Maldon District Council with precept demand.

2431. Payments

Councillor James Bunn proposed and Cllr. Peter Warren seconded that the payments in the schedule be approved. Councillor Signatories will authorise BACS payments.

Ref:	Payee	Method	Gross	VAT	Net
2431.1	E-on	DD	31.73	1.51	30.22
2431.2	A&J Lighting Solutions	DD	25.20	4.20	21.00
2431.3	Mrs J Bannerman (Salary & Allowance)	BACS	590.20	0.00	590.20
2431.4	Barclaycard (Zoom, Microsoft 365,CAB Book)	BACS	145.66	1.88	143.78
2431.5	National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners Ltd	BACS	66.00	11.00	55.00

2431.6	Woodham Walter Womens Club (Hire of Hall 2020)	BACS	60.00	0.00	60.00
2431.7	MDC (Community Engagement Team) (Estimate)	BACS	492.48	82.08	410.40

2432. Other Council Matters to note

2432.1 COVID-19 Clerks Update.

- i. Regular village emails continue to be sent by the Clerk with relevant updates for residents. Information is also put on the website on a regular basis. These emails will continue. There are now 152 on the village email list.
- ii. It was noted that Maldon is now in the highest tier of National Lockdown (Stay At Home) Information is cascaded via the village email once it has been collated.
- iii. The Maldon CVS (COVID response) continues. There have not been any requests for help forwarded to Clerk in Woodham Walter.
- iv. Maldon and District CVS are keen to help groups to replicate the Maldon Safe Space across the district, either as a "Safe space" or as an adaptation of an existing coffee morning or support session. Currently on hold due to National Lockdown. Councillors will consider this as we come out of lockdown as COVID has shined a light on isolated people in the village.
- v. There is now a community testing centre opened at Maldon Town Hall for testing of asymptomatic (no symptoms) to be tested as part of joint programme with ECC.

2432.2 Community Engagement Team (CET) – December report noted. Fewer hours were completed during the month due to the lockdown. The TruCAM patrols cannot be done during rain or when it is dark so the winter weather restricts this activity.

Parish / Town Council	Month	Total Number of Hours
Woodham Walter	Dec-20	02:30
Number of Tru Cam Patrols	Hours Spent on Tru Cam	Number of Offenders
2	1	4
PCNs Issued	FPNs Dog Fouling	FPNs Litter Fouling
0	0	0
ASB Issues	VMO (Vehicle Moved On)	
0	0	
Any Other Details		

2432.3 Woodham Walter Common – volunteer Warden Chris Wheadon reported that they had done a working party in the Autumn but lockdowns since then have prevented further works. There is no update on the agreement – clerk to chase again.

2432.4 AGM / Chairman/Vice Chairman. As the Council did not hold an AGM in 2020 as per Emergency Government Legislation as a result of COVID, Cllr. Tompkins remained in the Chair beyond the usual 2 year cycle. Cllr. Rushton is now able to take over as Chairman and this could take place at our February meeting. Clerk will double check the rules regarding changing the Chairman/Vice Chairman outside of an AGM which would negate doing the Admin involved in an AGM twice in the year (February and May).

2433. Highways & Infrastructure

2433.1 Moss on path at Mead Pastures – await works by Highways Rangers.

2433.2 Faded 30mph sign on The Street - reported but does not meet requirements for work.

2433.3 Slippery road surface at West Bowers Road. Await works.

2433.4 Curling Tye/Blue Mill Flooding – on-going. Flooding images at The Cats were shared with Councillors. Some local residents made an attempt to clear the gully to alleviate the problem. Clerk will chase Highways again regarding having the gully cleared. Clerk has spoken to landowners and requested that ditch works are attended to, this has been agreed with two landowners from The Cats to Shrubbery Farm. Further investigations regarding the various landowners responsible for ditches up to Manor Road junction and particularly to try and alleviate the significant issues around Park Cottages. Cllr. Bunn reported that he has investigated from The Cats to Blue Mill and confirms that the ditches once cleared will allow free drainage into the ultimate discharge point at the stream. Clerk will raise these issues with Cllr. Channer and ask her to chase this up.

2433.5 Blue Mill Lane – over grown Hedge reported by resident – reviewed and works in progress.

2433.6 Little Baddow Road – crack/drainage issue adjacent to Cartref/Valley House. Await works.

2433.7 Cut-a-Thwart Lane/Manor road junction – finger post – 3 times this has been knocked over, reported and repaired. Clerk to suggest Community Engagement Team uses covert CCTV.

2433.8 Maldon Ironworks Signpost outside Bell – request that this should be re-painted.

2434. Local Issues

2434.1 Bell Meadow a) Football Goals - ongoing b) Water Trees, Councillors are reminded to water the trees. c) DofE Volunteer – to note report d) Councillors are reminded to update excel document in the dropbox and report any issues to the Parish Clerk.

2434.2 Footpaths Report. Cllr. Warren reported plenty of mud! The footbridge on FP33 from Canal to Ravens Farm has shifted with the flood water which has been reported. FP13 running to Warren was temporarily blocked and has now been cleared.

2434.3 School Report. As Headteacher, Mrs Dodd was in attendance, she was invited to update the Council. Mrs Dodd reported that there are 109 children on the school roll but due to lockdown there are only very few key worker children attending. Parents have been excellent in making arrangements. Most staff are working at home to provide remote learning. They received 9 new Chromebooks from Government allocation and 12 laptops were reconfigured and sent out to pupils who needed them. Some families are having difficulties with Broadband connection and so they provide printed packs for them. The remote learning is working well and relies on the outstanding commitment of parents and carers.

2434.4 Litter – Parking Meter in stream Blue Mill Lane reported. The Annual Village Litter Pick will take place in February – Saturday 13/20/27 (TBC – weather/COVID-19 rules) Clerk will arrange remotely and liaise with Colin Warner and MDC. Fly tip along Little London Lane has been reported including some documentation with addresses which has been reported to the council for possible prosecution. A litter pick has been requested to Chelmsford City Council to clear between The Warren and The Anchor (ref: PP-002159-2021).

2434.5 New Playground Report Cllr. Symons reported that a useful site meeting had taken place on Bell Meadow with the selected playground company, Caloo. Waiting for response from MDC regarding minor variations and compliance with conditions with the Planning permission. Cllr. Jarvis suggested an alternative contact. As soon as we get the final permission the works will be able to start. Some further fundraising required for fencing.

2434.6 Memorial Garden Signage – on going.

2434.7 Neighbourhood Watch/Crime Reports. NHW Coordinator Gary Orford reported “The trend at the moment seems to be breaking into motor vehicles and stealing the contents. Recently found many tools in the stream along Blue Mills Lane – using all contacts including Whatsapp, Facebook and Neighbourhood Watch we found the owner who had his van broken into in Terling. Unfortunately, all power tools had been stolen but the tools we retrieved were of personal value. With this success I am building up contacts with local neighbourhood watch areas for future use.”

2435. Correspondence – Various items in the dropbox.

2436. Points of Information

2437. Date of Next Parish Council Meeting:

Next scheduled date of Ordinary Parish Council meeting is Monday 8th February 2021 and this will be held virtually by Zoom. Parish Clerk to monitor developments and guidelines as they are issued.

Signed *James Rushton*

Meeting ended at 9.10pm

Dated 8 February 2021