

MINUTES

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Woodham Walter Parish Council.

Held at 8.00pm at Woodham Walter Women's Club.

Monday 11th April 2022

Present:

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

Others: Jacky Bannerman (Parish Clerk)
District Councillor Simon Morgan
District Councillor Mark Durham (in attendance 8.00pm-9.45pm)

Geoff Hicks, Woodham Walter Primary School (in attendance 8.00pm – 8.25pm)
Phil Brown, Woodham Walter Primary School (in attendance 8.00pm – 8.25pm)
Michael Johnson, MDC Enforcement (in attendance 8.00pm – 9.25pm)
William Coleman, MDC Enforcement (in attendance 8.00pm to 9.25pm)

Public: None

2698. Welcome Cllr. Rushton welcomed those present to the meeting.

2699. To report, approve and record apologies for absence

RESOLVED to accept apologies received from Cllr. James Bunn and County Councillor Jane Fleming.

2700. 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). To consider any applications for dispensations.

As previously reported re: Warren Estate, 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 Estate as she is a member at Warren Active. There were no other interests declared.

2701. To approve minutes of Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 14th March 2022.

RESOLVED the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 14th March 2022 be approved and signed as a true record.

2702. Matters Arising - Progress report (not for resolution)

The report compiled by the Clerk was noted. Matters arising are contained within the agenda.

2703. Public Forum

There were no members of the public present.

2704. Woodham Walter Primary School

Geoff Hicks (Chairman of the Governors) and **Philip Brown** (Executive Headteacher) were welcomed to the meeting and invited to provide an update with regards to plans for a new teaching space.

- A recent Government White Paper recommends that all schools should be part of an Academy Trust. Woodham Walter is in a good position as they are already part of the 7 Spires Group of schools.
- Woodham Walter has very close links with All Saints in Maldon and hopes that the remaining schools in the 7 Spires Group will move towards a Multi-Academy Trust. It will be essential to show the school as thriving.

- The school is in dire need of additional learning space. They currently have 115 pupils, the annual admission number is 17 (set by County). The Early Years space is excellent.
- There are legal requirements for class sizes and for Y1/Y2 the level is 30, so with two lots of 17 they are in excess and therefore the group is split and taught in smaller groups. Currently one group needs to squeeze into a very small space which is not fit for purpose. Y3/Y4/Y5/Y6 can be taught in larger class sizes so at 34 this is an acceptable number and the existing demountable classrooms serves these year groups.
- They had considered utilising the bus but after consideration it is not cost effective to convert and the bus has now been removed from the school.
- A more traditional teaching space is needed and with limited success on funding applications, the decision has been taken to use reserves for a modular building which will cost in the region of £90-£100k.
- With an influx of children to the local area school places generally are over-subscribed. Although the plan being put in place is designed to cater for the existing children, there is a chance that the school could be pushed into taking a higher intake so the building will be an even greater requirement and asset.
- An architect has surveyed the site and proposed the location for the new building. A plan was shared with councillors showing the building positioned behind the school so that it will not be viewed from the road and is outside of the Conversation Area. The location is also suitable for water, drainage and power and will have ramp access and accessible toilet facility. The building will generate 55sq m of classroom space.
- They have given careful consideration that the building should be aesthetically pleasing in the rural setting and will include measures to soften the look. The building will be a big upgrade to the existing demountable classrooms.
- A planning application has been submitted and is awaiting verification after small amendments were made.
- The order cannot be placed until the planning approval has been received and it is hoped that works can be started as soon as possible.

Councillors thanked Mr Hicks and Mr Brown for updating the Council and commented generally about the plans.

- There is a long view from the Church so the building will need to blend into the location. Concerns were expressed that the colour in the picture shown may not achieve this aim.
- Councillors will await the planning application before discussing their response and noted that the Parish Council must respond within a time limit so will not hold up the decision-making process which is the responsibility of Maldon District Council.

Mr Johnson commented that it was useful to hear about the schools plans and to understand the time constraints.

Mr Brown and Mr Hicks then left the meeting room.

2705. Enforcement

Discussion with **Michael Johnson**, Lead Specialist Development Management and **William Coleman**, Specialist Enforcement Officer from Maldon District Council.

Cllr. Rushton welcomed the guests to the meeting and outlined the Parish Council's general concerns about Enforcement and specific issues with regards to The Warren Lodges. The Parish Council has been raising concerns since 2016. A year ago, at a virtual meeting with Mr Johnson and others from MDC, the Parish Council presented a long list of queries and since then despite requests for updates, very little information has been received. In November we were informed that Officers were requiring the owners provide a Register of Occupancy and that the site would be monitored during the closure period in January prior to updating the Parish Council. Also highlighted were the concerns regarding sheds etc and the appearance on the electoral roll of residents at the site. The Parish Council and the wider community has been frustrated and confidence in Enforcement is very low.

Mr Johnson and Mr Coleman provided the following comments during their update and discussion.

- Accept there have been failings within the department which has been through a difficult period. Staffing levels had dropped and the caseload has increased. However, with the appointment of Specialist Enforcement Officer William Coleman and the imminent appointment of another officer who will be tasked with investigating cases as soon as they are reported in order to give an immediate assessment if there is a breach of planning control, it is considered that the Enforcement Team will now be in a better position to tackle the backlog of cases. There will be a more coordinated approach and they plan to offer better communication.
- Woodham Walter is one of the key issues in the District and they intend to put in place measures to address these cases.
- There are currently 820 cases pending in the District and 28 of these are in Woodham Walter and 10 of those are at the Warren Lodges Park. Of the 28 cases 18 are active and 10 need to be reviewed and may be closed.

2707. Planning – DECISIONS (for consideration or report)

2707.1 There had been no decisions received.

2708. Other Planning Matters (for consideration or report)

2708.1 **Appeals** – Decisions and applications (for consideration or report)

2708.1 (a) **20/00519/FUL** **Warren Golf Club** **APPEAL IN PROGRESS**

Appeal Ref: APP/X1545/W/21/3280176. Additional tourism and interrelated leisure development, comprising 70 holiday lodges with associated change of use of the land within two areas of the site, alterations to existing Bunsay clubhouse, extension of Bunsay car park and new golf academy.

Parish Councillors have discussed their approach to the Inquiry. We will be registering to speak at the Inquiry, with the intention of focussing on those issues where we differ from the positions taken by MDC or the Appellant and on those issues where we have additional information which supports and enhances MDC’s arguments for refusal of the Appeal application. The Parish Council has put in a strong and detailed response to the Appeal, which the Inspector will be bound to read and take into account. Because we are not a direct party to the Appeal, and given the strength of our submissions to date, we have concluded that this is the most sensible approach. Given our weakened position as a third party in the context of the Inquiry, we don’t believe that the employment of an advocate would achieve more, even if a Rule 6 application were accepted and the large amount of funds required was able to be raised.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council do not support appointing a barrister or report authors to attend the hearing. The Parish Council cannot legally make any financial contributions to an un-constituted group. The Parish Council will attend the inquiry and register our intention to speak. Research will be undertaken once more information has been published.

It was noted that the Statement of Case and Statement of Common Ground documents have been uploaded to the MDC website and these documents will be reviewed. It was noted that there are some differences of opinion with regards to the agreed matters.

2708.1 (b) **20/01230** **Oak Farm, Oak Farm Road** **APPEAL DISMISSED**

Appeal Ref: APP/X1545/W/21/3277485 The development proposed a new three bedroom dwelling in accordance with Planning Permission ref 65/00293/FUL with a slight increase in footprint (retrospective).

The inspector concluded that the proposed dwelling would not be sustainable development, since it is not readily accessible to services by sustainable means, and the ‘tilted balance’ of Framework paragraph 11 d ii is not overriding in this case. An additional building would consolidate the small existing enclave of Woodham Walter Hall and buildings that have or had their origin in agriculture with associations with the open countryside. I consider that the proposed dwelling would be intrusive and harmful to the character of the immediate area and the countryside. In any event, the lack of mitigation to overcome the impacts of the development on European designated nature conservation sites means that the appeal will be dismissed.

Cllr. Durham noted that he had written to the Enforcement team with regards to enforcing this decision and requiring that the site is returned. It is understood that there remain some legal considerations in this case.

2709. To receive reports of the County and District Councillor’s.

It was noted that Cllr. Fleming had submitted a written report with information on: Ukraine; New TravelEssex app; Essex Library of Things; Essex Libraries Big Easter Book Hunt; Essex Trading Standards; Chelmsford North East Bypass update; Beaulieu Railway Station.

Councillor Simon Morgan introduced himself and was pleased to meet with the Parish Council for the first time since his election. He noted that he had appraised himself of the Warren Appeal case. He looks forward to serving as a District Member for Woodham Walter.

Cllr. Durham reported that RideLondon is due to come through Woodham Walter on 27th May and that he had also been liaising with Robert Mitchell from RideLondon with regards to the Wedding at St Michael’s. He understands that RideLondon have a budget for the hedge work required. Road repairs on the route of the ride are expected to be completed.

Cllr. Durham then left the meeting room at 9.45pm.

2710. Financial Matters (for consideration or report)

2710.1 The Summary of Accounts to date. This includes all transactions since the March meeting.

| DATE | ACCOUNT / TRANSACTION DETAIL | AMOUNT IN | AMOUNT OUT | BALANCE |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------|----------|
| Business Reserve A/C | | | | |
| 01-Apr-22 | Opening Balance | 16667.00 | | 16667.00 |
| 11-Apr-22 | Transfer to Community Account | | 2700.00 | 13967.00 |
| Community Account | | | | |
| 01-Apr-22 | Opening Balance | 908.18 | | 908.18 |
| 01-Apr-22 | Outstanding Debits from 2021/2022 | | 259.88 | 648.30 |
| 11-Apr-22 | Transferred from Business Reserve | 2700.00 | | 3348.30 |
| 11-Apr-22 | April Debits | | 2514.85 | 833.45 |

RESOLVED to accept the Summary of Accounts.

2710.2 Npower: It was noted that invoices for January and February have now been received and payment by Direct Debit is due 15/04/22.

2710.3 Pension. Noted that min ref. 2690.6.7 has been cancelled and the pension is due to begin in April. It was noted that due to difficulties with setting up the IRIS software the Clerk is investigating outsourcing the payroll.

2710.4 To agree the payments as listed in the payment schedule for April

| OUTSTANDING DEBITS FROM 2021/22 | | | | | |
|--|--|--------|--------|-------|--------|
| Min Ref: | Payee | Method | Gross | VAT | Net |
| 2671.2.1 | Npower (Payment due 15/04/22) | DD | 55.86 | 2.66 | 53.20 |
| 2690.6.1 | Npower (Payment due 15/04/22) | DD | 48.02 | 2.29 | 45.73 |
| 2690.6.6 | Skippers (Await completion of bench works) | BACS | 156.00 | 26.00 | 130.00 |

| APRIL PAYMENTS | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Ref: | Payee | Method | Gross | VAT | Net |
| 2710.4.1 | Npower (DD 19/04/22) | DD | 50.15 | 2.39 | 47.76 |
| 2710.4.2 | A&J Lighting Solutions | DD | 25.20 | 4.20 | 21.00 |
| 2710.4.3 | Mrs J Bannerman (Salary & Allowance) | BACS | 999.69 | 0.00 | 999.69 |
| 2710.4.4 | Barclaycard (Fasthosts/Post Office) | DD | 12.43 | 1.44 | 10.99 |
| 2710.4.5 | EALC/NALC Affiliation Fees | BACS | 189.00 | 0.00 | 189.00 |
| 2710.4.6 | LJ Print (Annual Parish Report/Jubilee Flyer) | BACS | 373.52 | 0.00 | 373.52 |
| 2710.4.7 | Maldon District Council (CET) | BACS | 631.08 | 105.18 | 525.90 |
| 2710.4.8 | Woodham Walter Village Hall | BACS | 20.00 | 0.00 | 20.00 |
| 2710.4.9 | Mrs J Bannerman (Expenses Refreshments APM) | BACS | 29.70 | 0.00 | 29.70 |
| 2710.4.10 | Nest Pension (Employee/Employer contributions) | DD | 184.08 | 0.00 | 184.08 |

* Barclaycard payments:

| | | |
|----------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| 24/02/22 | Post Office Ltd (Postage) | 3.79 |
| 02/03/22 | Fasthosts Internet Ltd (Emails) | 8.64 |
| TOTAL | (inc. VAT: £1.44) | 12.43 |

It was noted that the following Barclaycard payments are scheduled for May Statement.

| | | |
|---------|---------------------------------|--------|
| 24/3/22 | King & Co Nursery (Trees) | 120.00 |
| 28/3/22 | MDC Car Parking (Food workshop) | 2.00 |
| 29/3/22 | Ring Central Annual Sub | 187.06 |
| 31/3/22 | Post Office Ltd (Postage) | 13.49 |
| 1/4/22 | Amazon (Ink Cartridge) | 62.50 |

| | | |
|---------|--------------------------------------|--------|
| 2/4/22 | Fasthosts Internet Ltd (Emails) | 8.64 |
| 5/4/22 | Iris Business Software Ltd (Payroll) | 122.40 |
| 18/4/22 | TSO Host Annual Charge | 74.33 |

The BACS payments for April will be drawn up by the Parish Clerk and require authorisation by councillor signatory by Payment Date of 13th April 2022. The items shown as estimates will be drawn up for payment after receipt of invoice and authorisation.

RESOLVED that the payments as listed in the payment schedule be approved.

2710.5 Review of Bank Statements, Credit Card Statements and Account sheets for March.

Councillor Brown confirmed that he had carried out the review for March and found them to be reconciled correctly.

2710.6 End of the Financial Year. It was noted that works are being completed for audit.

2710.7 Party Tents. Discussion regarding whether a discount should be offered for charitable events.

RESOLVED that in line with previous years no discounts would be applied. The rate of £50 for one tent and £25 for each additional tent will be maintained.

2711. Other Council Matters (for consideration or report)

2711.1 Community Engagement Team (CET)

2711.1 (a) Await the March Report

2711.1 (b) RESOLVED that the Service Level Agreement should be signed and returned.

2711.2 Woodham Walter Common – Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT)

2711.2 (a) Cllr. Warren reported that he had spoken to EWT regarding the dangerous tree (FP7) and that they would chase this up.

2711.2 (b) It was noted that a Guided public tour of Woodham Walter Common with Essex Wildlife Trust has been arranged for 9.30am on Saturday 7th May.

2711.3 Platinum Jubilee Considerations – Cllr. Symons/Clerk reported on progress.

There is concern that a low response had been received following the leaflet which was delivered to properties with the Annual Report. There was also disappointment expressed that an alternative event in the village, which we had previously be assured would not clash with the village event, appears to be marketed as a Platinum Jubilee Event. It was reported that the tree had been purchased and Shelley Rand had kindly collected and volunteered to plant.

RESOLVED that the clerk will send out a Village email reminder and also a reminder in the Parish magazine and if there is insufficient support the event may be cancelled. The memento for the children will still be purchased.

RESOLVED to liaise with Shelley Rand and Cllr. Brown regarding the location of the trees.

2711.4 Email/Website – The matter is progressing.

2711.5 Allotments Report – see below.

2711.6 Climate Action

2711.6 (a) To consider any actions that the Parish Council should take

RESOLVED to defer discussion to future meeting.

2711.6 (b) Sustainable Danbury – Community Energy Benefit Society (Scheduled to attend meeting in May)

2711.7 Annual Parish Meeting Points of Action.

(a) funding request from Allotment Association

RESOLVED to notify of grants available

(b) Note of thanks to Mr Wilks for emergency works undertaken at St Michael's

RESOLVED to write a letter of thanks

(c) Locality Fund

RESOLVED to notify local organisations of the fund.

- (d) Flytipping increase – consider requesting further signage
RESOLVED to request further signage on Old London Road at junction with Curling Tye Lane.
- (e) Guided Public Tour of Woodham Walter Common – Saturday 7th May
RESOLVED to publicise the event.
- (f) Consider putting map of Woodham Walter Common on website
RESOLVED to review the existing Danbury map and provide a link from our website.
- (g) Climate Action conversation needed to consider measures the Parish Council/Community can take.
RESOLVED to discuss at future meeting.
- (h) Consider a request for reduced cuts of verges
RESOLVED to investigate ownership of the area highlighted

2711.8 Food Provision Workshop – Cllr. Symons/Clerk reported that they had attended the event and found some useful information. The main barrier will be determining if there is sufficient need in Woodham Walter for providing a food bank in the village. It was noted that St Michael's Church have a collection point for food donations which are then take to the Maldon Food Bank and that if there was found to be a need in the village that these donations could be utilised.

RESOLVED to give further consideration at future meeting including the idea of hosting a regular coffee morning both to establish any needs in the community, to provide information and advice and also for the very important aim of providing a social meeting place for people.

2712. Highways & Infrastructure (for consideration or report))

2712.1 Various matters on-going as detailed in the Highways log.

2712.2 Broadband Update – no information.

2712.3 Road Closures. There continue to be various road closures for road and Broadband works in and around the village over the next few weeks. All notifications received are put on the website.

2712.4 Street Lights – To consider recommendation from Cllr. Bunn

RESOLVED to consider further. Concerns were expressed as to how the proposed light would fit on existing posts.

2713. Local Issues (for consideration or report)

2713.1 Bell Meadow & Memorial Garden

2713.1.(a) Football Goals – Await goals to be moved by Skippers.

2713.1.(b) Playground - Await installation of new bench by Skippers.

2713.1 (c) Playground – councillors were concerned to hear of a report of a child banging their head when climbing up to the slide platform.

RESOLVED that the clerk will raise the issue with the manufacturer and ask if there have been any other reports of similar accidents and if there are any retro-fit safety features.

2713.1 (c) Memorial Garden – There were no matters for report.

2713.1 (d) DofE Volunteers – It was noted that one volunteer had completed their commitment and one has another 3 months to go. It was also noted that a further volunteer had come forward and clerk will liaise. The volunteers will tidy up the sticks on the Memorial Garden.

2713.1 (e) Annual Inspection – it was noted this is due to take place in May.

2713.2 Footpaths Report. Cllr Warren reported that low hanging trees on FP22 (Blue Mill) had been reported to ECC and had been cleared very promptly.

A local landowner had been in touch to report that people have been wandering across crops and not sticking to the marked footpaths. All residents and visitors are urged to keep to footpaths. There is no right to roam in Woodham Walter.

2713.3 School Report. See above.

2713.4 Crime Reports/Neighbourhood Watch Report. No information to report.

2713.5 Bell Meadow Village Association. Saturday 10th September 2022. The event organisers are progressing. To consider correspondence received regarding distribution of any profits from the event.

RESOLVED to apply for funding towards the replacement Goal Posts.

2713.6 Ride London 27-29th May – various road closures expected in Essex over the weekend. To note that the Elite Ladies race will come through Woodham Walter on Friday 27th May (estimated between 12-3pm) and will include various road closures. Details of route indicates that it goes through the village via the following roads (direction tbc) : Old London Road, Oak Farm Road, Church Hill, Little Baddow Road.

The event will have a considerable impact on the village including a Wedding scheduled at St Michaels. Clerk reported on meeting with RideLondon and with Wedding party. The Wedding party have had to change the time and arrangements of their wedding and the Parish Council has been asked to allow parking on Bell Meadow for wedding guests.

RESOLVED to allow the wedding party to park on Bell Meadow.

RESOLVED to liaise with RideLondon and Wedding Party.

RESOLVED to continue advising residents and local businesses about the event.

2713.7 Ukraine – it was noted that the Clerk had attended a meeting at Danbury Parish Council with the Danbury Volunteers group who are leading on the local response. They have agreed to include surrounding villages. Recent information has been shared with the local residents in Woodham Walter who have informed the Parish Council that they have registered as Hosts. The County and District Council's have started to provide information and links are supplied on the Parish Council website. Any other residents who have registered as hosts are asked to inform the Parish Council.

RESOLVED to continue to share information and if/when Ukrainian families join hosts in Woodham Walter then the Parish Council will consider arranging a coffee morning or similar to welcome families to the village.

2714. Correspondence – Various items of correspondence have been received and shared with Councillors and where appropriate the public via the website and village emails. There were no matters for resolution.

2715. Points of Information/Items for future agenda

2715.1 Councillors were disappointed to learn that a local resident had been seen picking daffodils from the roadside verge. The daffodils are for everyone to enjoy and should not be picked.

2716. Date of Next Parish Council Meeting:

Ordinary Parish Council meeting with Annual General Meeting - Monday 9th May 2022 at 8pm at Woodham Walter Women's Club.

2717. The Chairman closed the meeting at 10.25pm

Signed

Dated