

MINUTES

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Woodham Walter Parish Council.

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

Monday 9th January 2023

Present:

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

Others: Jacky Bannerman (Parish Clerk)
District Cllr. Mark Durham (in attendance from 8.00-9.10pm)
District Cllr. Simon Morgan (in attendance from 8.00-9.10pm)
County Cllr. Jane Fleming (in attendance from 8.30-9.10pm)

Public: 1 (in attendance from 8.00-8.45pm)

2852. Welcome Cllr. Rushton welcomed those present to the meeting.

2853. To report, approve and record apologies for absence

RESOLVED to accept apologies from Cllr. Jenny Hughes.

2854. 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) As previously reported re: Warren Estate, Cllr. James Rushton declared a non-pecuniary interest as his wife is a member at Warren Active. There were no other interests declared and the register was completed.

2855. Public Forum

There was one member of the public present who attended as they are interested in the council's discussion regarding enforcement at The Warren Lodges. They reported that the VOWEL group consider new planning applications from The Warren Estate are likely to be forthcoming and the group want to prepare for any action which may be required. The suggestion was also made that if there are other parishes with similar enforcement issues then there might be merit in joining forces.

They were thanked for attending by the Chairman and invited to remain in the meeting room.

2856. To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meetings held on Monday 12th December 2022.

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2022.

2857. Matters Arising - Progress report (not for resolution)

The report compiled by the Clerk was noted. Matters for report are contained within the minutes.

2858. Planning – APPLICATIONS RECEIVED (for consideration or report)

2858.1 22/01198/PDE 7 Church Corner

Single storey rear extension which would extend beyond the rear wall of the original house by 4.60m, maximum height of 3.15m and the maximum height to the eaves of 2.85m

Permitted Development application: For information only.

2858.2 There were no further applications received.

2859. Planning – DECISIONS (for consideration or report)

2859.1 There were no decisions received.

2860. Planning – APPEALS (for consideration or report)

2860.1 APP/X1545/D/22/3304050 (HOUSE/MAL/22/00373) 15 Rectory Road

APPEAL ALLOWED, PERMISSION GRANTED for the erection of a two-storey side extension, porch to front and relocation of an oil tank.

2861. Planning - Enforcement

2861.1 To receive any updates from Mr William Coleman from Maldon District Council (MDC).

There were no updates received.

2861.2 To consider response regarding complaint made to MDC about Enforcement procedures.

It was noted that a Stage 1 response has been received which aims to answer questions raised by the Parish Council including about general enforcement processes, adherence to conditions on planning approvals at the Warren Lodges and other cases raised in the parish.

Concerns have been raised over many years but there appears to be no mechanism for checking if the register is correct and there are barriers which affect a meaningful enforcement of conditions. It is very disappointing that MDC do not appear to have the power to do anything about people living at the Warren Lodges. It is therefore apparent that some planning conditions are not fit for purpose.

The MDC response included information about staffing levels which although Councillors understand the problem, the fact that they do not have the resources to carry out their functions is not our problem. It is understood that Enforcement is a discretionary function of the council, however according to MDC's Planning Enforcement Policy it is the policy of the council "to take a robust approach to enforcing against confirmed breaches of planning control".

There is confusion over the escalating of a complaint with the council and very little information available. Stage 2 is to write to the Director but it is unclear what Stage 3 would be as MDC do not have a Chief Executive Officer; the Monitoring Officer only deals with complaints against Members and the Local Government Ombudsman is for individuals to raise complaints not organisations. The only other avenue appears to be to write to our local MP and/or to write to the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities. Further research will be carried out regarding escalation of complaints.

RESOLVED to raise the complaint to Stage 2 and write to the relevant Director, Mr Richard Holmes, Director of Service and Head of Paid Service.

2861.3 There were no other enforcement matters to consider.

2862. Other Planning Matters (for consideration or report)

2862.1 To consider any response regarding Cllr. Durham raising points re: decisions (December 2022, Min ref: 2839.6)

Cllr. Durham has not received a response and will chase this up.

The member of the public then left the meeting room at 8.45pm.

2863. Climate Action – Councillor Rushton to report

The Climate Action Working Party will be actioned in January (Wednesday 25th January at 7pm, Women's Club).

Cllr. Rushton outlined that the Parish Council Working Group will be looking at realistic measures which can be taken for and by the community.

RESOLVED there should be a minimum number of 2 parish councillors on the group but it will be up to the group to select a Chair.

District Cllr. Durham reported that Essex County Council are concerned that multiple parishes are all doing their own thing and they are trying to come up with information which will be useful for all. He highlighted the Tollesbury Partnership who have a dedicated group and have received some significant funding. Maldon & Heybridge also have groups.

2864. To receive reports of the County and District Councillor's.

It was noted that County Cllr. Fleming had provided a written report with information on: Flexible Plastics Collection trial; Voter ID requirement; Energy Shortage; RideLondon route; ECC Adult mental health and wellbeing team; how to donate unwanted appliances; First Site Colchester Climate Emergency Youth Summit; Employability focus groups; Disability strategy; Essex residents panel; Beaulieu Park Station update; Chelmsford North East bypass update; Apprentice levy gifting; Climate Action Annual Report; Essex forest initiative; green retrofit training;

It was noted that District Cllr. Morgan had forwarded bulletins from MDC including information on the flexible plastics collection and the new Voter ID requirement.

Full information received is shared with Councillors and in the village email as appropriate.

Cllr. Morgan reported that at the full Council meeting in December a proposal to disband the planning committees had been defeated.

Cllr. Durham indicated that it was unusual for local authorities to have area committees and that it is likely the change will happen at some point in the future for Maldon - especially with devolution and shared services on the table.

Cllr. Fleming reported that it may become essential in time as planning officers are in short supply across the country and Maldon has difficulty recruiting.

Cllr. Fleming reported that the ECC Cabinet are due to meet next week to agree the Council tax budget. She will be attending the People and Families committee including discussions about the Library Service which has recently seen an uplift in use. The Highways Rangers service will no longer be funded by ECC for District Councils and MDC have decided they will not be supporting the service. Therefore, it was suggested that the Parish Council should consider including a budget for items in the village which had previously been carried out by the rangers.

RESOLVED that Clerk will chase up the current request for the Highway Rangers to clear the path between the Church and Fort Cottage. Councillors will allow a budget for some local matters, however where it is considered that the service required is the responsibility of Highways, requests will be submitted.

Cllr. Durham reported that he is due to have a meeting with relevant County Councillors regarding Papermill Bridge and Hoe Mill Bridge including a site visit. Cllr. Fleming will also attend.

Cllr. Durham, Cllr. Morgan and Cllr. Fleming then left the meeting room at 9.10pm

2865. Financial Matters (for consideration or report)

2865.1 To receive the Summary of Accounts to date. This includes all transactions since the December meeting.

DATE	ACCOUNT / TRANSACTION DETAIL	AMOUNT IN	AMOUNT OUT	BALANCE
Business Reserve A/C				
12-Dec-22	Balance			28722.57
09-Jan-23	Transfer to Community Account		2700.00	26022.57
Community Account				
12-Dec-22	Balance			336.13
12-Dec-22	Refund from Nest	98.57		434.70
09-Jan-23	Transferred from Business Reserve	2700.00		3134.70
09-Jan-23	January Debits		2524.76	609.94

RESOLVED to accept the statement of accounts.

2865.2 To authorise the payments as listed in the payment schedule for January payments

JANUARY PAYMENTS					
Ref:	Payee	Method	Gross	VAT	Net
2865.2.1	Npower	DD	36.13	1.72	34.41
2865.2.2	A&J Lighting Solutions	DD	25.20	4.20	21.00
2865.2.3	Mrs J Bannerman (Salary & Allowance)	BACS	632.14	0.00	632.14
2865.2.4	Nest Pension (Employer £39.98 Employee £63.96)	DD	103.94	0.00	103.94
2865.2.5	Barclaycard (Fasthosts, Amazon)	DD	166.40	27.73	138.67
2865.2.6	Eslip Payroll (await invoice)	DD	20.36	3.39	16.97
2865.2.7	A&J Lighting Solutions (Brook Close Maintenance)	DD	175.20	29.20	146.00
2865.2.8	HMRC (Month 7,8,9) Estimate	BACS	729.15	0.00	729.15
2865.2.9	Maldon District Council (CET) Estimate	BACS	582.24	97.04	485.20
2865.2.10	EALC (Election Briefing)	BACS	54.00	9.00	45.00

* Barclaycard payments: (December Statement)

2/12/22	Fasthosts	29.90
22/11/22	Amazon (Gate Closers)	129.98
24/11/22	Fasthosts (Mailbox Clerk)	6.52
TOTAL	(inc. VAT: £27.73)	166.40

To note the following Barclaycard payments are scheduled for January Statement.

2/1/23	Fasthosts	29.90
24/12/22	Fasthosts (Mailbox Clerk)	6.52

The BACS payments for January will be drawn up by the Parish Clerk and require authorisation by councillor signatory by Payment Date of 12th January 2023.

RESOLVED to approve the payments as listed.

2865.3 Review of Bank Statements, Credit Card Statements and Account sheets for December.

Cllr. Brown confirmed that he had carried out the review of December documents and found them to be reconciled correctly.

2865.4 2023/24 Budget Considerations and Precept Setting

It was noted that one comment had been received from a member of the public that a proposed increase of 12% (as was recorded in the December minutes) was unacceptably high.

Councillors had reviewed the budget prepared by the Clerk/RFO in detail and taken into account expenditure, income (including the hire of party tents and grant funding), carried over/reserve funds, as well as inflation and cost of living considerations. Proposed plans to include:

- replacing the goal posts
- replacing the noticeboard
- purchasing no-parking signs for the Memorial Garden
- staff costs and general admin
- street lights (including replacement programme to LED)
- grass and hedge cutting
- Bell Meadow and the playground
- Community Protection Team (TRUcam speed enforcement/school parking/playground inspections)
- event to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III.
- donations to local organisations

Councillors are minded that the council needs to be sure that it is providing services that council tax paying village residents want and expect us to do. With no other comments received Councillors are content that the services offered provide for a well-kept village including the costs for replacing and purchasing items that are required. The council also needs to adhere with the Reserves Policy so that it remains financially solvent.

RESOLVED that the precept demand be set at £28,665 (an increase of £2665 which is 10.25%). The cost to an average Band D property in Woodham Walter will rise by just under £10 to around £105.35 for the year. The Clerk/RFO will send the Parish Precept Form to Maldon District Council.

RESOLVED that despite an anticipated increase in printing costs for the Annual Parish Report, this is still an essential method of reaching the whole community which Councillors continue to support.

RESOLVED that identifying grant funding would be an excellent idea. This will be considered at the next meeting including seeking a councillor volunteer to take on this role.

2866. Other Council Matters (for consideration or report)

2866.1 Community Engagement Team (CET)

- (a) The December report is awaited.
- (b) School parking enforcement

The Clerk reported that the CET is concerned that the level of attendance for School parking enforcement does not very effectively tackle the problem and that the school should be encouraged to engage with the South Essex Parking Partnership to discuss school parking and how they can help embed the 3PR scheme at the school. The clerk will again share the details with the school and include Cllr. Symons in her capacity as the representative of the Parish Council on the School Governing body.

2866.2 Woodham Walter Common – Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT)/Living Landscapes. Await update.

2866.3 Allotments Report. No information to report.

2866.4 Local Council Awards Scheme – It was noted that the application has been submitted. Await triage feedback Deadline 27th January, respond to triage deadline 10th February. Panel Results due: 11th April 2023.

2866.5 HM King Charles III Coronation – to set up a Working Party to organise the marking of the Coronation.

RESOLVED that Cllr. Symons/Clerk will set up a meeting for interested persons on Monday 30th January at 7.30pm in Women's Club to consider the Coronation. Ideas include hosting a village picnic on Bell Meadow, purchasing gifts for the children of the village and producing a village t-towel (which should raise funds to help towards costs).

2867. Highways, Transport & Infrastructure (for consideration or report)

2867.1 Various matters on-going as detailed in the Highways log

- Noted that the large pothole near the Warren entrance has been repaired.
- The gully's at Church Hill are in need of clearance which was very clear during the recent burst water main. Clerk to report again.
- The poorly located drain opposite The Bell has again been reported to Highways via County Cllr. Fleming.

2867.2 To consider a request for a salt bin at the triangle junction of Bassetts Lane/Spring Elms Lane after recent snow/ice had caused 2 cars in separate incidents to skid into the ditch.

RESOLVED that this could be considered in the future but that in the first instance an application should be submitted to Highways who should be responsible. It was also agreed that a supply of the Parish Council salt/grit stocks could be offered for a local resident volunteer to store and distribute as required.

2867.3 Ride London Sunday 28th May 2023. It was reported that the route does not appear to come through Woodham Walter or Maldon District. The 2023 RideLondon-Essex route enters Essex through Epping Forest, continuing through central Epping, Ongar, Leaden Roding, Great Dunmow, Felsted and Writtle, before returning to Ongar and heading back into London.

2868. Local Issues (for consideration or report)

2868.1 Bell Meadow & Memorial Garden

(a) Annual Safety Report recommendations - ongoing

(b) Football Goals.

RESOLVED that Clerk will check on anchors and arrange for the goals to be moved as the current pitch area is getting muddy. Cllr. Bunn volunteered to help.

(c) Playground Report

It was noted that Cllr. Brown had fitted the new playground gate self-closers which are working well.

(d) Memorial Garden

It was reported that correspondence has been received from Land Registry who require further information to be submitted.

RESOLVED that Cllr. Tompkins will assist with creating the required plan. Clerk to liaise and request Commons registration information.

(e) There were no further matters for report.

2868.2 Footpaths Report – Cllr. Warren reported that the New Year’s Day walk had been a success. The weather was good, there were 37 walkers and 5 dogs. Raised £420 for Farleigh Hospice. Thanks to The Cats. It was also noted that BR10 (South of golf course to Twitty fee) has a fallen oak branch over the path which is hazardous to horse riders. This has been reported to the council and hazard tape is in place.

2868.3 School Report - Cllr. Symons (Parish Council representative on Governing Body). No information to report.

2868.4 Crime Reports/Neighbourhood Watch Report.

a) Various reports and newsletters (none specific to WW)

2868.5 Tadpoles – Councillors were pleased to note that the nursery has received an “Outstanding” Ofsted inspection.

RESOLVED that a letter of congratulations should be sent.

2869. 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.

a) Christmas card from Rt.Hon Priti Patel MP

c) Essex Police Newsletters

e) Warbler January 23

g) Westcombe Park Update

b) EALC Legal bulletin

d) Oyster Magazine Winter

f) Food provision notes

h) Community Forum notes

2870. Points of Information/Items for future agenda

2870.1 Village Litter Pick – date to be set. Clerk to arrange.

2870.2 Chairmanship – subject to a vote at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May, Cllr. James Rushton indicated that he will be happy to remain in the Chair for an additional year.

2871. Date of Next Parish Council Meeting:

Next scheduled Ordinary Parish Council meeting - Monday 13th February 2023 at 8pm at Woodham Walter Women’s Club.

2872. The Chairman closed the meeting at 10.00pm

Signed

Dated