

## MINUTES

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Woodham Walter Parish Council.

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

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023

### **Present:**

Cllr. James Rushton (Chairman)

Cllr. John Brown

Cllr. James Bunn

Cllr. Joanna Symons

Cllr. John Tompkins

Cllr. Peter Warren

Others: Jacky Bannerman (Parish Clerk)

District Councillor Simon Morgan (in attendance until 9.50pm)

County Councillor Jane Fleming (in attendance from 8.30pm-9.50pm)

Public: 5

**2959. Welcome** Cllr. Rushton welcomed those present to the meeting.

### **2960. To report, approve and record apologies for absence**

RESOLVED to accept apologies received from Cllr. Jenny Hughes and District Cllr. Mark Durham

2961. Disclosure of Interests/Consideration of Dispensations To disclose the existence and nature of any Disposable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs), Other Registerable Interests (ORIs), or Non-Registerable Interests (NRIs) 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. James Rushton declared a non-registerable interest in the planning application at Almshouses as he is a Trustee, Cllr. John Tompkins declared a non-registerable interest in the Planning application at Almshouses as he has offered advice and it was noted that Cllr. Jenny Hughes has declared an Other Registerable Interest as her husband will be carrying out the works to the tree should permission be granted.

Cllr. John Brown declared an interest as he is the applicant of the planning application at 1 Whitehouse Cottages.

### **2962. Public Forum**

There were 5 members of the public present and all were in attendance to raise comments with regards to the planning application at Highfields, Bassetts Lane.

- The land has not been used for agricultural purposes other than recent sheep grazing, so they question if the land has been in continuous use.
- Concerns regarding the future intentions of other buildings within the field.
- The remaining agricultural land will no longer be accessible for agricultural purposes.
- Concerns regarding the water supply to the property.
- Demand for restrictive covenant in the case that this application is approved to prevent any future works.
- Concerns that approving this application will open the flood gates to other similar applications.
- The land was sold by the former owner of Elwy a year or so ago. It is understood that this resident had written to MDC to notify them that it was sold as agricultural land and should remain so.
- No notice has been erected so residents had only found out through the Parish Council notifications.

### **2963. To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting with Annual General Meeting held on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023.**

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

### **2964. Matters Arising - Progress report (not for resolution)**

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

### **2965. Planning – APPLICATIONS RECEIVED (for consideration or report)**

2965.1 23/00535/TCA

Almshouses, Rectory Road

T1 – Magnolia – Pruned reducing height and radius by 1m

Cllr. James Rushton and Cllr. John Tompkins had declared non-registerable interests in this application.

RESOLVED to support with comment that councillors accept the tree is beginning to encroach on the garden path and the light into No.1 is affected, and it is best to cut back before it gets too big. However, there was concern that if the tree is cut by reducing the radius by 1m as per the application description, that this would be a significant reduction. Councillors rely on the expertise of the tree officer.

2965.2 23/00481/PACUAR Highfields, Bassetts Lane

Prior notification for the change of use of an agricultural building to 1No dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) and for associated operational development.

RESOLVED to report that no notice has been erected.

It was noted that reuse of redundant farm buildings is supported within the Maldon Local Development Plan and the adopted Woodham Walter Village Design Statement and remains part of government legislation, so if the applicant can prove they adhere to the terms of the legislation, then there is little that can be done as it comes down to a legal argument which will be determined by the Local Authority. It is understood from evidence presented by neighbours that the field has not been in use for a significant period and that it is only recently that sheep have been grazing the field. Councillors were sympathetic to residents' concerns and these will be reflected in the response even where they are not relevant because it is a Prior Approval Change of use application.

RESOLVED to comment as above.

The residents were advised to write with their comments directly to Maldon District Council.

The public then left the meeting room at 8.30pm

### **2966. Planning – DECISIONS (for consideration or report)**

2966.1 HOUSE/MAL/23/00239 The Cottage, Bassetts Lane APPROVE (DEL)  
Replacement porch and insertion of larger window to the front.

2966.2 HOUSE/MAL/23/00311 Dabblers, Little Baddow Road APPROVE (DEL)  
Increase ridge height to create a first floor, construction of single storey side and rear extension, front infill extension, front entrance porch and carport.

Cllr. Tompkins commented that the decision was disappointing. Whilst design is subjective, the VDS was compiled by residents and it raises the question as to "what is the point of the VDS", or of continuing with the review of a document that appears to be consistently ignored by the LPA. Government documents also explore design and beauty and the MDC Corporate Plan makes reference to supporting communities and enhancing and connecting our place. This decision appears to ignore this advice.

RESOLVED to feedback comments to the LPA. It was noted that these concerns may be able to be discussed at a future Parish & Town Council Forum.

2966.3 23/00106/FUL 1 Whitehouse Cottages, Blue Mill Lane APPROVE (DEL)  
Demolition of existing stables and outbuildings. Construction of a two storey outbuilding incorporating stables, garage and hobby room with solar panels.

Cllr. Brown had declared an interest as he was the applicant. He commented that the process had been very stressful and took 16 weeks plus 4 weeks to validate. He noted that ecology has no deadline for responses and that this had extended the period for decision.

2966.4 Awaiting the following decisions: 23/00154/LDE Annexe at Guys Farm, Manor Road; 23/00306/FUL The Rookery, Lodge Farm; 23/00465/HOUSE 7 Church Corner.

### **2967. Planning - Enforcement**

2967.1 To receive any updates from Maldon District Council (MDC) Enforcement Team. None received.

2967.2 To update on the complaint made to MDC regarding Enforcement. Await dates for meeting.

2967.3 There were no other enforcement matters.

### **2968. Other Planning Matters (for consideration or report)**

2968.1 Response awaited from MDC regarding the technical query about the COUPA approval at Oak Farm. District Cllr. Morgan continues to chase this up.

2968.2 To note planning application notification received from Planning Agent re: Top Road. The application has not yet been validated and we await notification from MDC. Councillors debated whether a public meeting should be organised once the application has been received but given that this application is understood to be with all matters reserved, they

do not consider a separate public meeting will be expedient as the decision will be based purely on whether there is support or objection to that area of land being designated for houses. The design, layout and all other aspects of the proposal is immaterial and could very likely be changed at full application stage so there is no point in debating that aspect of the application at this stage. If the reserved matters application was to be approved by the LPA then there would be reason to hold a public meeting when a full application for the site is received. All Parish Council meetings are open to the public in any case so anyone interested would be able to attend an Ordinary meeting at which it will be discussed.

Cllr. Fleming advised that it is always a good idea to notify residents if any significant application is received and encourage comments to the LPA.

RESOLVED that information would be distributed to village residents which sets out the main points, gives guidance and encourages responses once councillors have discussed and resolved their recommendations at an ordinary meeting. Although it was noted that as with all planning applications, if the timing of the application deadline dictates, it may be necessary to organise an extra ordinary meeting.

### 2968.3 Medium/Small Village classification

RESOLVED to request a virtual meeting with Head of Policy & Implementation, Anne Shoreland at MDC to discuss the information which is in the public domain and considered to be an inaccurate analysis of the village. The information has not been updated despite previous representations being made. The Top Road application is a practical example of the impact of the wrong information being published.

2968.4 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) – Cllr. Brown reported on discussions with Little Baddow/Danbury PC who are considering an application to dedicate an AONB and have invited Woodham Walter to be included in the application which would also include an extended buffer zone. It was noted that Essex Wildlife Trust, some County and City Councillors are supporting the bid along with Rt. Hon. Sir John Whittingdale MP. The Government has targets for green space for leisure use, although councillors raised concerns that the tourism debate may be a double edge sword for the village. The committee have asked for support and volunteers to collate information and evidence. If Woodham Walter Parish Council was to commit to this, a contribution of £500 has been requested.

RESOLVED to consider in detail at the next Parish Council meeting.

### 2969. Climate Action – On going

#### 2970. To receive reports of the County and District Councillor's.

District Cllr. Morgan reported that an Extra Ordinary Meeting of the District Council had been held and MDC now has an Independent administration. Details of the appointments are available on the website and were sent out in a village email. Cllr. Morgan has been appointed to the Highways and South Essex Parking Partnership panel and Cllr. Durham has been appointed Chairman of the North West Area Planning Committee.

Cllr. Morgan will be holding one of his regular surgeries at Wickham Bishops Library on Saturday. He will send the details to the Clerk for inclusion in the village email.

Cllr. Morgan had shared a presentation regarding the A12 junction at Hatfield Peverel and the Maldon Road by-pass options. However, there is no funding from National Highways for the Maldon Road by-pass so even though the preferred route is indicated as 2b this may never happen. Parish Councillors raised concerns that option 2b is the worst option as it may result in a negative impact as Woodham Walter could become a rat run from the A414 to/from A12.

The current Highways England plan is for the A12 junctions at Hatfield Peverel to be closed and a new roundabout junction be created to the north. These changes will currently go ahead without the link road to Maldon Road.

RESOLVED to write to Matt Wilmslow at MDC with Woodham Walter Parish Council's comments and concerns.

County Cllr. Fleming had sent a written report with information regarding: Road surfacing update; Essex Book Festival; Summer Reading Challenge; Free Wetland Wonder Trails at ECC Parks; Essex Year of Reading & Numbers; Mental Health Training; Carers Week; Return to Social Care programme; Recycling booking system; Apprenticeship Support; Carbon Cutting App; Innovation in Digitech Event – 7<sup>th</sup> July; Essex Green Skills Summit; Carbon Literation Project; Essex Forest Initiative Tree counter; £2 Digiggo Single Fares extended; Climate Action projects.

They noted that £17.3 million in funding for highways maintenance had been agreed. There will be Member pothole and footway schemes for which the Clerk can submit suggestions.

The Locality Fund is now accepting applications and there is a new Local Community Fund.

Devolution - The County Council has submitted an expression of interest to form a Super Authority with an elected Mayor.

Cllr. Morgan and Cllr. Fleming then left the meeting room at 9.50pm

### 2971. Financial Matters (for consideration or report)

2971.1 To receive the Summary of Accounts to date. This includes transactions since May meeting.

Date	Business Reserve Account Detail	Transaction	Amount In	Amount Out	Balance
16-May-23	Balance		0.00	0.00	46220.51
05-Jun-23	Interest Received		75.92	0.00	46296.43
12-Jun-23	Transferred to Community Account		0.00	3500.00	42796.43
			75.92	3500.00	42796.43

  

Date	Community Account Transaction Detail	Amount In	Amount Out	Balance
15/05/2023	Balance	0.00	0.00	1958.82
16/05/2023	Transferred from Business Reserve	1200.00	0.00	3158.82
16/05/2023	May Debits	0.00	1798.10	1360.72
30/05/2023	Tea Towel Income (Orford)	12.00	0.00	1372.72
30/05/2023	MDC Community Hub Grant	1000.00	0.00	2372.72
12/06/2023	Income from Party Tent Hire (Inv #2)	50.00	0.00	2422.72
12/06/2023	Transferred from Business Reserve	3500.00	0.00	5872.72
12/06/2023	June Debits	0.00	5433.72	439.00
		5762.00	7231.82	439.00

RESOLVED to accept the statement of accounts.

2971.2 To authorise the payments as listed in the payment schedule for June.

Ref:	Updated/Outstanding Payments Payee	Method	Net	VAT	Gross
#21	EALC (Foundation Award)	BACS	80.00	16.00	96.00
#22	Skippers Ground Maintenance	BACS	750.00	150.00	900.00
			830.00	166.00	996.00

  

Ref:	June Payee	Method	Net	VAT	Gross
#26	A&J Lighting Solutions	DD	21.00	4.20	25.20
#27	Npower	DD	40.90	2.04	42.94
#28	Mrs J Bannerman (Salary & Allowance)	BACS	1054.20	0.00	1054.20
#29	Nest Pension (Employer £75.59, Employee £120.94)	DD	196.53	0.00	196.53
#30	Barclaycard	DD	488.19	86.19	574.38
#31	Topsource Worldwide Uk Ltd (Eslip) Payroll	BACS	18.29	3.66	21.95
#32	Zurich Insurance Company Ltd	BACS	391.02	0.00	391.02
#33	Woodham Walter Village Hall (Walter's May)	BACS	22.50	0.00	22.50
#34	Woodham Walter Village Hall (Annual Parish Mtg)	BACS	20.00	0.00	20.00
#35	CPRE (Annual Subscription)	BACS	36.00	0.00	36.00
#36	G Orford (refund - overpayment for tea towels)	BACS	12.00	0.00	12.00
#37	Woodham Walter Women's Club (Annual Grant)	BACS	231.00	0.00	231.00
#38	Woodham Walter Village Hall (Annual Grant)	BACS	310.00	0.00	310.00
#39	Essex Wildlife Trust (Annual Grant)	BACS	1000.00	0.00	1000.00
#40	Parish Magazine (Annual Grant)	BACS	250.00	0.00	250.00
#41	Heelis & Lodge (Internal Audit)	BACS	250.00	0.00	250.00
			5171.63	262.09	5433.72

To note the following Barclaycard payments.

Date	Barclaycard Payments (May Statement)	Net	VAT	Gross
24/04/2023	Fasthosts (Mailbox Clerk)	5.43	1.09	6.52
25/04/2023	Amazon (Coronation)	24.05	4.82	28.87
27/04/2023	Screwfix (Padlocks for goal posts)	66.23	13.25	79.48
28/04/2023	Amazon (Laser cartridge)	56.66	11.33	67.99
28/04/2023	Amazon (Stationery)	21.07	4.21	25.28
01/05/2023	Promotional Cashback (Credit)	-3.04	0.00	-3.04
02/05/2023	Green Magic UK Ltd (A-Board -Walter's)	66.83	13.37	80.20
02/05/2023	Amazon (Stationery)	14.11	2.83	16.94

02/05/2023	Fasthosts (Mailbox)	27.75	5.55	33.30
02/05/2023	Timpson's (Coronation Plaques)	79.16	15.83	94.99
05/05/2023	Tesco (Coronation)	15.59	0.00	15.59
05/05/2023	Aldi (Coronation)	30.44	0.00	30.44
06/05/2023	Fasthosts (Linus PHP)	5.78	1.16	6.94
17/05/2023	Morrisons (Walter's)	14.04	0.75	14.79
18/05/2023	Post Office (Postage)	4.10	0.00	4.10
18/05/2023	Tesco (Walter's)	10.00	2.00	12.00
18/05/2023	Microsoft 365	49.99	10.00	59.99
		488.19	86.19	574.38

Date	Barclaycard Payments (Scheduled June Statement)	Net	VAT	Gross
24/05/2023	Fasthosts (Mailbox Clerk)	5.43	1.09	6.52
02/06/2023	Fasthosts (Mailbox)	27.75	5.55	33.30
06/06/2023	Fasthosts (Linus PHP)	5.78	1.16	6.94
		38.96	7.80	46.76

The BACS payments for June will be drawn up by the Parish Clerk and require authorisation by councillor signatory by Payment Date of 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

RESOLVED to approve the payments as detailed in the schedule.

2971.3 Review of Bank Statements, Credit Card Statements and Account sheets for April and May.  
Cllr. Brown confirmed that he had reviewed the documents and that items were reconciled correctly.

2971.4 End of Financial Year 2022/2023

- (a) It was agreed that through the financial year the Clerk has provided a monthly summary of accounts and quarterly financial reports to councillors.
- (b) The Accounts and Bank Statements are regularly checked by a councillor and this is reported at Parish Council meetings
- (c) The Chairman confirmed he has reviewed the Accounts file
- (d) Relevant financial information is available on the Woodham Walter Parish Council website
- (e) Internal Auditor Report – the detailed written report and Agar Annual Internal Audit Report had been received and shared with councillors. There was one recommendation with regards to updating the Financial Risk Assessment to include GDPR. RESOLVED that the Clerk will investigate this recommendation.
- (f) The Clerk/RFO confirmed that the AGAR form Section 2 had been duly certified in advance of the meeting.
- (g) Councillors noted the explanation of variances documents which were completed and shared with Councillors.
- (h) End of Year Accounts – Annual Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2023. Councillors acknowledged as members of Woodham Walter Parish Council their responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. Councillors confirmed, to the best of their knowledge and belief, with respect to the Account Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023 and the questions in Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2022/2023 were duly answered. All councillors approved and the document was duly signed by the Chairman and Clerk/RFO.
- (i) End of Year Accounts – Accounting Statements for the financial year ended 31 March 2023. Councillor's confirmed that Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2022/23 be approved and the Chairman signed the declaration.

RESOLVED that the Clerk will arrange to send the accounts to the auditor and arrange to display the relevant information on the noticeboard and the website as per the regulations.

2971.5 Grant Applications

- (a) MDC Community Hub – it was confirmed that the grant of £1000 had been received. It was noted that MDC had been oversubscribed with applications for £23,000 and awarded £8,000 in grants for Community Hubs. The Clerk was congratulated on the successful application.
- (b) Research required re: goal posts/noticeboard/memorial garden signs

2971.6 Scribe Update – the Clerk reported that she had attended follow up training sessions and that the account system was now working well. There are a few areas that require further development. All councillors have the ability to log in to Scribe for a detailed review of accounts, although relevant reports are shared within the monthly meeting papers in the onedrive.

2971.7 Party Tent Bookings – it was noted that a few bookings have been made and the Clerk requested help to check the tents are ready for hirings.

## **2972. Other Council Matters (for consideration or report)**

### 2972.1 Community Engagement Team (CET)

- (a) May Report (noted)
- (b) The CET will attend the next Parish Council meeting.
- (c) A request had been made for TruCAM attendance between 0730-0800am
- (d) A request had been made for the team to monitor parking (in association with South Essex Parking Partnership) at Hoe Mill.

### 2972.2 Woodham Walter Common – Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT)/Living Landscapes Update

It was reported that Essex hedgerow funding had been secured for 3790m hedgerow within Woodham Walter. Volunteers will be sought to assist with the planting later in the year.

### 2972.3 Allotments Report

- (a) Consider funding request (await information).
  - (b) Review paperwork
- RESOLVED that a meeting will be arranged with the Allotments committee to discuss.

### 2972.4 HM King Charles III Coronation Reports

It was agreed to defer the discussion with regards to the final accounts and owl box purchase to the next meeting.

2972.5 Grass Cutting Tender – it was confirmed that insurance and risk assessment documentation had been received. Clerk to chase up the outstanding contract document.

### 2972.6 Annual Parish Meeting – Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May at 8pm. Matters Arising

- (a) Climate Action Questionnaire – analysis on-going. Discussion to be deferred to next meeting.
- (b) Arrange for CET to attend for TRUcam between 07.30-08.00am. It was noted that this had been requested.

2972.7 To consider the following policies, procedures and protocols which are subject to further review.

- (a) Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover. It was noted that the policy had been renewed with Zurich.
- (b) Emergency Plan – ongoing.
- (c) Action Plan – this document to be reviewed at next meeting.
- (d) Register of Members Interests – Although most Councillors have completed the document, 2 have been reminded they need to complete their disclosed interests on the Maldon District Council on-line form.

### 2972.8 Parish & Town Council's Forum

Cllr. Rushton and The Clerk reported that they had attended the first meeting and indicated that it should be a useful forum for the future. The Corporate Plan and new departmental structure had been presented.

## **2973. Highways, Transport & Infrastructure (for consideration or report)**

2973.1 Various matters on-going as detailed in the Highways log.

### 2973.2 Salt Bag Partnership Scheme

RESOLVED to sign up to the scheme again. Clerk to check salt stocks with Skippers.

2973.3 Comment received from resident regarding street cleaning on 06/06/23 which had been reported to MDC as they were not satisfied with the works done which they thought had made it worse. It was noted that the street cleaning team had subsequently returned to complete the clean again.

## **2974. Local Issues (for consideration or report)**

### 2974.1 Bell Meadow & Memorial Garden

- (a) Annual Safety Report 2023 – Expected during May/June.
- (b) Football Goals – no information to report.
- (c) Playground Report
  - Clerk to investigate the costs of an annual maintenance agreement.
  - The gate catches are not currently holding the gates closed. It was thought that this is due to the changing weather conditions and will be monitored.
- (d) Memorial Garden
  - Land Registry Update – it was noted that a response had been received and that Highways are responsible for the area directly opposite the Bell.

RESOLVED to write to request remedial action is taken, especially after the recent water main burst which has further eroded the road and layby.

- No Parking Signs – on-going
- County Broadband

RESOLVED to write to County Broadband with regards to the agreement for their equipment which was installed on the Memorial Garden.

(e) Hedging Trees

- Post and rail fence should be reinstated to tidy up the area. Clerk to seek price.

(f) Any other matters for report.

- Damaged fence rail – Cllr. Rushton has repaired.

- Recent evidence of BBQ is a concern and signs will be erected so that no BBQ's or Fires are permitted. There was also 2 bags of rubbish left by the party which is unacceptable. Clerk to request MDC clear and will put a note in the village email.

2974.2 Footpaths Report. Cllr. Warren reported that the footpaths are currently overgrown and await cutting. Several paths are difficult to traverse in places including FP 36, 14, 16 and 18. FP 32 (Lodge Farm to WW Hall) has been cleared by Maldon Ramblers.

2974.3 School Report - Parish Council representative on Governing Body. The 3 school governing bodies are due to meet together for a training day. The Summer Fete is on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> July. Plans are in place for Mrs Dodd's retirement events.

2974.4 Crime Reports/Neighbourhood Watch Report.

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

(b) The Essex Police Rural Engagement Team are due to attend Walter's Café on 15<sup>th</sup> June.

2974.5 Litter

(a) Dog bin request from local resident at Bassett Lane

RESOLVED Councillors do not support the proposal as we already have a commitment to provide a dog bin this year at the Rectory Road end of the village and with a limited budget this is not something we are able to commit to. They are also unsure if there is a sufficient issue to warrant a dog bin in such a rural area.

2974.6 Walter's Third Thursday Café – Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> June.

2974.7 Noise – it was noted that a phone call was received from The Warren Golf Club prior to an outdoor event on 20/5/23. However, no noise was detected or reported from local residents that night.

Comments with regards to loud fireworks at 10pm on 1/6/23 (audible at Stivvys Road/Little Baddow Road) and 4/6/23 (Blue Mill Lane – although this may not have been from The Warren).

RESOLVED to write to The Warren to notify them that comments had been received.

2974.8 Hoe Mill – Bridge jumping. A group of teenagers were recently witnessed jumping off the bridge. To note that Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation Bye-Laws include that no person shall dive or jump from any lock, bridge etc and that there is a fine not exceeding £500 which could be imposed for doing so. To consider if there are any actions that the Parish Council could/should take to warn of the danger such as reporting to Essex Waterways or Community Engagement Team/requesting warning signs.

RESOLVED to write to Essex Waterways with concerns and request signage.

**2975. Correspondence** – Various items of correspondence have been received and shared with Councillors and where appropriate the public via the website and village emails.

a) Essex Police Newsletter

b) MDC Corporate Plan

c) EALC Certificate of Membership

d) Allotments/NHP Flyers from EALC

e) Fizz & Flowers

f) EALC AGM – 21<sup>st</sup> September

g) Letter from Mrs Herrmann re: village records

h) Rotary News

i) SLCC Local Clerks Week

j)

RESOLVED to write to Mrs Herrmann and indicate that there is interest at least from several councillors in viewing the documents and consideration will be given as to where they may be kept.

**2976. Points of Information/Items for future agenda**

**2977. Date of Next Parish Council Meeting:**

Next scheduled Ordinary Parish Council - Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at 8pm in Woodham Walter Women's Club.

(NB: July meeting one week later than usual due to Clerk summons to Jury Service and out of office 3<sup>rd</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> July)

2978. The Chairman closed the meeting at 10.35pm.

Signed

Dated