

## MINUTES

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Woodham Walter Parish Council.

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

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

### **Present:**

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

Others: Jacky Bannerman (Parish Clerk)  
District Councillor Simon Morgan (in attendance until 9.30pm)

Public: 4

**3060. Welcome** Cllr. Rushton welcomed those present to the meeting.

### **3061. To report, approve and record apologies for absence**

RESOLVED to accept apologies received from County Cllr. Jane Fleming.

**3062. Disclosure of Interests/Consideration of Dispensations** To disclose the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs), Other Registerable Interests (ORIs), or Non-Registerable Interests (NRIs) relating to items of business on the agenda having regard 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).

There were no interests declared.

### **3063. Public Forum**

There were 4 members of the public present and 3 wished to make comments with regards to planning applications.

Ref: The Rookery. The applicant informed councillors about the changes in ground levels between the east and west elevations of the converted barn. The raised area allows access to the garden area on the same level as the accommodation. The balustrade has been chosen so that the view remains visible. Footpath 16 runs through the permitted curtilage; the raised patio does not interfere with this and the fence panels have now been removed so that the footpath is clear. He has a meeting booked with the Public Rights of Way Officer to look into the possibility of diverting the path in the future.

Ref: Highfields. A local resident informed councillors of his strong objection to the application which is on agricultural land; not in the defined settlement area; horses and sheep have recently been grazing; Maldon District has a sufficient housing land supply; previous similar application refused and this new application does not address reasons for refusal; concern that there will be more speculative applications in other pockets of agricultural land in the area if this one is approved.

Ref: Highfields. The applicant was in attendance to answer any questions that councillors may have. This new application addresses the points in the refusal of the previous application such as reducing the amenity area.

### **3064. To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023.**

RESOLVED to accept the minutes which were duly signed by the Chairman.

### **3065. Matters Arising - Progress report (not for resolution)**

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

### **3066. Planning – APPLICATIONS RECEIVED (for consideration or report)**

3066.1 23/00897/HOUSE The Cottage, Bassetts Lane

Proposed widening of drive at junction with Bassetts Lane.

For information only. The application was responded to using Clerks Delegated powers in order to meet the deadline for responding. The council supports the application.

It was noted that a concurrent application to vary a condition (ref: 21/00856/FUL) was refused and the applicant informed that a full planning application is required for the newly erected fence and hedge.

3066.2 23/00935/TCA Brookside, The Street

T4 Poplar – Re-pollard by 8m

RESOLVED to support the application.

3066.3 23/00992/HOUSE Dabblers, Little Baddow Road

Single storey side and rear extension, front infill extension and front entrance porch. Fenestration alterations.

RESOLVED to support the application. Councillors felt that the proposal was an improvement on the previous application.

3066.4 23/00968/PACUAR Highfields, Bassetts Lane

Prior notification for the change of use of an agricultural building to one dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) and for associated operational development.

Councillors commented that the agricultural use argument had still not been proven one way or the other. Agreed that the Planning Officer will need to decide if the application meets with the Part Q regulations.

RESOLVED to support the application with comments.

The applicant and the resident then left the meeting room at 8.25pm

3066.5 23/01036/SCR Land East of Tom Tit Lane, Woodham Mortimer (& north of Old London Road, Woodham Walter)

EIA Screening Opinion request for a proposed solar photovoltaic farm together with associated infrastructure.

Councillors discussed the application and made the following comments:

- Arcadian village and importance of arcadian landscape
- Visible from wider village area
- Impact of solar panels, fencing, internal service roads and lighting etc
- Impact on local infrastructure
- Loss of farmland
- Cumulative aspect of site as it joins with another earmarked for development.
- Cumulative impact because of the number of solar farms approved for the local vicinity.

RESOLVED to respond that this council considers an Environmental Impact Assessment is required due to the significant environmental impact that the proposal will have on Woodham Walter.

3066.6 23/01045/HOUSE Summerfield, Spring Elms Lane

Erection of gates.

RESOLVED to respond with no objection to the installation of gates but comment that the selection of materials does not align with the VDS.

3066.7 23/01025/FUL The Rookery, Lodge Farm

Section 73a application for the installation of raised patio, glass balustrade and steps.

Councillors discussed the application and made the following comments:

- Footpath issue appears to have been resolved and is open (albeit there may be an application to divert in future)
- The permission to convert the barn into a dwelling house had been achieved under Part Q and it will be down to the officer to decide if the Section 73a application meets with the regulations.

RESOLVED to support the application with a comment regarding the footpath remaining accessible and questioning if the application meets with the Part Q regulations.

The other two members of the public then left the meeting room at 8.45pm

3066.8 23/00314/OUTM Land south of Fambridge Road, Burnham Road and East of West Station Road, Althorne

Outline planning application with all matters reserved except for access, for phased mixed use development including up to 550 dwellings; up to 1000sqm commercial space early years facility; education provision; District Park; Local Park. Allotments.

RESOLVED to respond with an objection as the local infrastructure in the district cannot cope with more development. Concerns that additional traffic will further impact the already busy Maldon roads and access routes including the A414 through Danbury and the B1019 through Hatfield Peverel.

3066.9 There were no further applications.

### **3067. Planning – DECISIONS (for consideration or report)**

3067.1 23/00846/FUL Grove Manor, Herbage Park Road REFUSE

Retrospective change of use of land to residential garden.

RESOLVED to write to the Enforcement team to ask for this to be followed up.

3067.2 23/00306/FUL The Rookery, Lodge Farm Road WITHDRAWN

Retrospective extension to garden area and installation of raised patio, lass balustrade, fencing and steps.

3067.3 23/00858/FUL Warren Golf Club APPROVE

Erection of 5.5 metre metal lighting column (lamp post)

3067.4 Decisions are awaited on the following applications:

(a) 23/00762/FUL Woodham Walter Primary School

RESOLVED to enquire why this application has not yet been decided.

### **3068. Planning - Enforcement**

3068.1 To consider updates following meeting with Anne Altoft-Shorland (MDC Head of Policy Implementation)

It was reported that, whilst there remains a number of unresolved Enforcement investigations, the meeting had provided useful information and clear responses. A further meeting for the future has been offered which councillors agreed would be useful.

RESOLVED to enquire about Plot 1 at Oak Farm as there remains evidence of building works above ground level along with Heras fencing, builders bags/materials etc. Councillors consider that as the application has been refused the land should be returned to agriculture.

### **3069. Other Planning Matters (for consideration or report)**

3069.1 Medium/Small Village classification – The update and advice from meeting with Anne Altoft-Shorland was noted.

RESOLVED to find out where the updated information is on the website.

3069.2 Historic complaint to MDC remains extant– await meeting date. District Cllr. Morgan reported that he had spoken with Matt Wilmslow and a meeting will be arranged soon.

3069.3 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

To give further consideration to the application and the results of the public consultation.

250 surveys were delivered to all properties in the village as well as reminders via the village email. This should have reached the approx.543 population (2021 census). 66 responses received and many of these were responses from more than one resident from each property (perfectly understandable and everyone was entitled to respond) but the actual percentage of responses was considered low.

The results were: 39 join the application, 20 not join and 7 wait to see what the government plans. Councillors were not satisfied that this provided strong enough support.

Further considerations and research had been carried out including the opinion that the suggested area was not large enough to be successful and should encompass a larger area of land.

RESOLVED that having looked at the results of the survey and also taken into consideration the costs, time and resources required to administer the application (especially within a very limited timescale) compared against the likelihood of the application being successful and the pros and cons that it may bring, they do not currently support joining the application. They will keep this under review for the future.

3069.4 Housing Needs Survey / VDS- Parish Plans-NHP

To consider information and any actions following meeting with RCCE.

RESOLVED to defer discussion to December meeting.

3069.5 Solar Farm

It was noted that a response is awaited to questions asked of Lightsource BP.

3069.6 Chelmer Valley Landscape Group – To consider if representative should attend future meetings

RESOLVED that a volunteer should be sought to attend future meetings.

**3070. Climate Action** - it was noted that the Chairman is to be invited to a joint meeting being organised by Claire Williamson from MDC.

**3071. To receive reports of the County and District Councillor’s.**

District Cllr. Simon Morgan reported that the full council meeting in November had been postponed. There had been a motion regarding the disbanding of the Area Planning Committees but this had been withdrawn. However, it was indicated that this is being considered as a cost saving measure for the future and is likely to be put to full council again at some point in the future.

County Cllr. Fleming had sent a written report with information including: Consultation on recycling centre bookings; Support to grow business; Access funded development opportunities for schools; Army & Navy funding; Defining natural spaces; pot holes; flood prevention; Essex forest initiative; Careers in Early Years and childcare; Advice for young people with SEND; Advice to stay safe when shopping online; National career development month; Autumn Covid boosters; Waste strategy consultation.

It was also noted that the Clerk had been liaising with Cllr. Fleming with regards to potholes and flooding issues in the village and that it was appreciated she had provided useful advice, information and intervention.

Cllr. Morgan then left the meeting room at 9.30pm

**3072. Financial Matters (for consideration or report) (ESTIMATE)**

3073.1 To receive the Summary of Accounts to date. This includes transactions since October meeting.

Date	Business Reserve Account	Transaction Detail	Amount In	Amount Out	Balance
11-Oct-23	Balance				35,405.55
6 Nov 23	Transferred to Community Account (HMRC)			622.44	34,783.11
13-Nov-23	Transferred to Community Account (Nov Debits)			3300.00	31,483.11
			0.00	3922.44	31,483.11

  

Date	Community Account	Transaction Detail	Amount In	Amount Out	Balance
09/10/2023	Balance				809.01
11/10/2023	Transferred from Business Reserve (Oct Debits)		2000.00		2809.01
11/10/2023	October Debits			1845.78	963.23
13/11/2023	Outstanding Debits #75 & #98			43.90	919.33
13/11/2023	Transferred from Business Reserve (Nov Debits)		3300.00		4219.33
13/11/2023	November Debits			3287.17	932.16
			5300.00	5176.85	932.16

RESOLVED to accept the accounts to date.

3073.2 Summary of Payments for November

Ref:	Updated/Outstanding Payments	Payee	Method	Net	VAT	Gross
#75	Topsource Worldwide Uk Ltd (Eslip) Payroll		DD	18.29	3.66	21.95
#98	Topsource Worldwide Uk Ltd (Eslip) Payroll		DD	18.29	3.66	21.95
	Sub Total			36.58	7.32	43.90

  

Ref:	November Payee	Method	Net	VAT	Gross
#100	HMRC (1/4ly payment) (Paid 6/11/23)	BACS	622.44	0.00	622.44
#101	A&J Lighting Solutions	DD	21.00	4.20	25.20
#102	Npower	DD	63.69	3.18	66.87
#103	Mrs J Bannerman (Salary/Allowance/Backpay) * see agenda 14.7	BACS	1093.16	0.00	1093.16
#104	Nest Pension (Employer £79.48 , Employee £127.16)	DD	206.64	0.00	206.64
#105- #110	Barclaycard	DD	97.23	17.52	114.75
#111	Topsource Worldwide Uk Ltd (Eslip) Payroll	DD	18.29	3.66	21.95
#112	Woodham Walter Village Hall (Walter's October)	BACS	22.50	0.00	22.50
#113	Skippers Ground Maintenance	BACS	230.00	46.00	276.00
#114	Maldon District Council (CET)	BACS	607.95	121.59	729.54
#115	Maldon District Council (Playground Inspection)	BACS	65.10	13.02	78.12
#116	The Poppy Appeal (Royal British Legion)	CQ 101633	30.00	0.00	30.00
	Sub Total		2425.56	209.17	3287.17
	Total		2462.14	216.49	3331.07

Barclaycard Payments (Statement 21/10/23)				
Date		Net	VAT	Gross
21/09/2023	Co-Op (Walter's refreshments) #105	1.95	0.00	1.95
24/09/2023	Fasthosts (Mailbox Clerk) #106	5.43	1.09	6.52
02/10/2023	Fasthosts (Mailbox) #107	27.75	5.55	33.30
06/10/2023	Fasthosts (Linus PHP) #108	5.78	1.16	6.94
10/11/2023	Vistaprint (AONB Leaflet) #109	48.62	9.72	58.34
19/10/2023	Co-Op (Walter's refreshments) #110	7.70	0.00	7.70
		97.23	17.52	114.75

Barclaycard Payments (Scheduled November)				
Date		Net	VAT	Gross
	Fasthosts (Mailbox Clerk)	5.43	1.09	6.52
	Fasthosts (Mailbox)	27.75	5.55	33.30
	Fasthosts (Linus PHP)	5.78	1.16	6.94
	Walter's refreshments			
		33.53	6.71	40.24

RESOLVED to authorise the payments as detailed in the schedule.

The BACS payments for November will be drawn up by the Parish Clerk and require authorisation by councillor signatory by Payment Date of 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

3073.3 Review of Bank Statements, Credit Card Statements and Account sheets for October.

Cllr. Brown required an additional report which the Clerk will provide. The review will be reported to the next meeting.

3073.4 Banking - To report on the progress of opening of the new bank accounts.

The application has been submitted and the signature form duly completed. Signatories will then be required to provide relevant information.

3073.5 Grant Applications

- (a) Research required re: goal posts/noticeboard/memorial garden signs - on-going
- (b) Winter Warmth application – not successful as the project did not sufficiently meet the criteria of the fund. See also min ref: 3076.6b
- (c) To receive any applications from local organisations (report only consideration not due until December meeting)

3073.6 Street Lighting Maintenance Contract

Correspondence with other Clerk colleagues over recent months indicates there do not appear to be any alternative suppliers in order to get a comparison price. However, the fee has not been increased, the level of service received on call-out remains good. The Clerks recommendation is to renew the contract with A&J Lighting Solutions over a 5 year period.

Cllr. John Brown proposed and Cllr. Peter Warren seconded that the contract should be renewed. All councillors in agreement.

RESOLVED to renew the contract with A&J Lighting Solutions for a 5 year period.

3073.7 2023/24 Local Government Services Pay Agreement

RESOLVED to approve implementation of the new pay rates which have been agreed by NALC, SLCC and ALCC. This includes backpay to April 2023.

#### **3074. Other Council Matters (for consideration or report)**

3074.1 Community Engagement Team (CET)

- (a) October Report to be noted. There were 10 captures with the TruCAM speed enforcement.

3074.2 Woodham Walter Common – Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT)

- (a) To receive report following tour of the common on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October
- Councillors who had attended the tour reported that it had been very interesting and worthwhile. There was evidence that the new rides had been successful. An area is to be enhanced for a colony of Barbastelle Bats which have been found during surveys. Some standing deadwood was left and there was some concern expressed where it is adjacent to footpaths. The Action Plan document was provided and explained including one of the over-riding current strategies in the management of Woodham Walter Common, to create a mosaic of trees of different ages to prevent the simultaneous die-back of trees in the same locations. The new waymarked walking trail was highlighted and copies distributed.

3074.3 Allotments Report – there was no information to report.

3074.4 Remembrance Sunday – The Chairman had represented the Parish Council at the St Michael's Service and laid the wreath. The Memorial shelter had been readied with thanks to Faye Neale, Viv & Paul Clark. Risk Assessment had been updated.

3074.5 Annual Staff Review – Cllr. Rushton to action and report at next meeting.

**3075. Highways, Transport & Infrastructure (for consideration or report)**

3075.1 Various matters on-going as detailed in the Highways log.

3075.2 Various drainage issues reported. 2/11 Clerk liaised with residents on The Street and made reports of issues. Clerk reported liaising with Cllr. Fleming, Highways and MDC.

3075.3 Various Potholes reported to County Councillor Fleming.

3075.4 Drainage opposite The Bell. It was noted that a small sandbag had been strategically placed to divert the water into the misaligned drain and that this has helped.

3075.5 Pothole adjacent to recent repair at Top Road/Street junction to be reported.

**3076. Local Issues (for consideration or report)**

3076.1 Bell Meadow & Memorial Garden

(a) Football Goals

- Cllr. Bunn reported that a search using a metal detector for the anchors had so far been unsuccessful. Clerk/Cllr. Bunn will meet to try again.

(b) Playground Report

- Graffiti on slide/slide frame. Mostly removed. Some further work required.
- It was agreed that a maintenance visit should be arranged and that this will be considered as an annual requirement for future budgets.

(c) Memorial Garden

- No Parking Signs – Grant funding options on-going. It was reported that advice received from Planning Department that no application is required.
- County Broadband – To consider proposed contract/payment. Await response to request for enhanced payment which would be used towards costs for the new signs.

(d) Tree Survey completed

- Cllr. Warren/Clerk reported that this had been carried out and only a few minor issues will be reported to Skippers for action.

(e) It was noted that Skippers will attend to the Wildflower Area in the Spring.

(f) To consider any other related updates – None

3076.2 Footpaths Report

Cllr. Warren reported that 2 bridges had rotted and been reported at FP14 (Church to Whitehouse Farm where it meets FP16) and FP4 (between Stivvys Road/West Bowers).

3076.3 School Report – Representative on Governing Body – Cllr.Symons

- Head of School Pippa Edlin will attend the December meeting.
- A Federation consultation document had been distributed.
- Year 6 children are due to attend Walter's café.
- The school will be assisting with hedge planting in the village in December.
- It was noted that a decision with regards to the change of use of the field behind the school is awaited and that the school may need to look into other options if this is not successful. The Council will advise the school that an agreement to use Bell Meadow including the football goals could be considered.

RESOLVED to discuss these matters at the next meeting.

3076.4 Crime Reports/Neighbourhood Watch Report.

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

(b) It is understood that a vehicle window had been smashed in the Mead Pastures area recently.

3076.5 Litter

(a) 2 fly tips reported on Little Baddow Road. CET attended and removed rubbish and erected deterrent sign, no further reports received since sign was put up.

- (b) a large fly tip had blocked Curling Tye Lane at the weekend and it still remained, the Clerk has followed this up.
- (c) a dead fox (Little Badow Road) and a dead deer (Little London Lane) had been reported to MDC for removal.

3076.6 Walter's Third Thursday Café

- (a) Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October – the village archive was available for inspection and those present had enjoyed looking through.
- (b) Winter Soup Lunch. Winter Warmth – not successful in application.

RESOLVED to proceed with the additional soup lunch which will be funded in part by excess funds from the Woodham Walter Village Lunch group along with a request for sponsors. Having reviewed the proposed budget, the Parish Council will cover other costs if required. The additional Walter's Soup Group will meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday in December, January, February and March and aims to provide a warm space and hot soup lunch to local residents who will need to book ahead. Clerk to arrange.

- (c) Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November – Year 6 children will attend to talk about their recent residential trip. Maldon CVS are attending to provide a Slipper Upgrade.

3076.7 Queen Victoria

A welcome letter had been sent to the new owner who had responded that they do not have plans to re-open in 2023 but this will be reviewed in 2024. Any necessary permissions will be sought for works (ref: Conservation Area), it was agreed that a proposed meeting should be arranged to see how the Parish Council may support future plans.

3076.8 Ride London 2024 – it was noted that the race will again come through Woodham Walter on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

**3077. Correspondence** – Various items of correspondence have been received and shared with Councillors and where appropriate the public via the website and village emails.

- |                             |                                   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a) Community Forum Notes    | b) Community Energy Schemes       |
| c) EALC AGM Resources pack  | d) Essex Rural Partnership Nov 23 |
| e) Essex Police Oct 23      | f) Heritage Winter Talks          |
| g) MD Climate Action Update | h) Waste Reform                   |
| i) Women's club Magic Night | j) MDC Conservation Awards        |

**3078. Points of Information/Items for future agenda**

**3079. Date of Next Parish Council Meeting:**

Next scheduled Ordinary Parish Council - Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December at 8pm in Woodham Walter Women's Club.

3080. The Chairman closed the meeting at 10.35pm

Signed

Dated