

MINUTES

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Woodham Walter Parish Council.

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

Monday 8th January 2024

Present:

Cllr. James Rushton (Chairman)

Cllr. John Brown

Cllr. Joanna Symons

Cllr. John Tompkins

Cllr. Peter Warren

Others: Jacky Bannerman (Parish Clerk)

District Councillor Simon Morgan (In attendance until 8.35pm)

Public: 1

3102. Welcome Cllr. Rushton welcomed those present to the meeting.

3103. To report, approve and record apologies for absence

RESOLVED to accept apologies received from Parish Councillor's James Bunn and Jenny Hughes and District Cllr. Mark Durham.

3104. 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).

Cllr. James Rushton declared an ORI as he is a Church Warden and a NRI as his wife is a School Governor and Member of Warren Active.

During the meeting the Clerk notified those present that a planning application had been received. Cllr. John Brown and Cllr. Joanna Symons declared DPI's as they are neighbours to the property Granville Hall.

3105. Public Forum

There was one member of the public present who was in attendance to introduce himself prior to moving to Woodham Walter with his family.

He was welcomed and thanked for the interest shown in attending the meeting.

3106. To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 11th December 2023.

The minutes were approved as a true record of the meeting and duly signed.

3107. Matters Arising - Progress report (not for resolution)

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

3108. Planning – APPLICATIONS RECEIVED (for consideration or report)

3108.1 23/01183/HOUSE Bassetts Lodge, Bassetts Lane

Construction of single storey side and two storey rear extensions. Extensions to first floor to include balcony. Alterations to fenestration. New patio including swimming pool and pergola. Single storey side extension to outbuilding including alterations to fenestration, installation of solar panels and EV charger(s).

Councillors were generally supportive of the proposed alterations and extensions at the property but raised an objection to the design and materials of the roof.

The roof proposal does not accord with the Adopted Woodham Walter Village Design Statement and is out of character for the area. Councillors therefore recommend that the application is refused.

The current proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy D1 in the Local Development Plan and Part 12 of the NPPF, clauses 131-141 inc.

RESOLVED to object to the application.

3108.2 It was noted that one further application had been received but too late to appear on the agenda.

Cllr. John Brown and Cllr. Joanna Symons declared DPI's as they are neighbours to the property Granville Hall.

23.01235/HOUSE Granville Hall, Hop Garden Lane

First floor extension and single storey rear extension.

The Clerk will respond using delegated powers as per Standing Order 15.b.xv.

3109. Planning – DECISIONS (for consideration or report)

3109.1 23/00762/FUL Woodham Walter Primary School APPROVED (Delegated)

Proposed change of use of agricultural field to playing field for Woodham Walter CofE Primary School.

Noted Condition 4: Should the use hereby permitted cease, the land shall be restored to its condition before the development took place.

3109.2 23/01045/HOUSE Summerfield, Spring Elms Lane APPROVED (Delegated)

Erection of gates.

Note: The materials used for the gates was revised to wooden.

3109.3 23/00992/HOUSE Dabblers, Little Baddow Road APPROVED (Delegated)

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

3109.4 23/01025/FUL The Rookery, Lodge Farm APPROVED (Delegated)

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

Note: The Public Right of Way (FP16) is protected by the Highways Act 1980 and shall be maintained free and unobstructed at all times.

3109.5 Decisions are awaited on the following applications:

(a) 23/01129/HOUSE The Cottage, Bassetts Lane

S73a application for the construction of fence and native species hedge within front garden.

(b) 23/01092/HOUSE & 23/01093/LBC Little London House, Little London Lane

Single storey rear extension to dwellinghouse. Alterations to outbuilding comprising new internal staircase, two new conservation rooflights and new window.

3110. Planning - Enforcement

3110.1 To consider any updates or reports – none received.

3111. Other Planning Matters (for consideration or report)

3111.1 Rural Facilities Survey (Ref: Medium Village Classification) – it was noted that a response had been received. The points had been correctly awarded but the text had not been updated. This has now been amended to remove reference to the shop and the document uploaded to website.

3111.2 Historic complaint to MDC remains extant– await meeting date. Cllr. Morgan to chase up again.

3111.3 Essex Minerals Local Plan Review – Councillors will attend a briefing session on 30th January. We are informed that one or more sites within the parish have been put forward for consideration for inclusion in the new Mineral Local Plan. The public consultation is scheduled for February.

3112. To receive reports of the County and District Councillor’s.

District Cllr. Morgan reported that the council has resolved to raise the annual green waste bin charge to £75/year. Budget negotiations are ongoing and should be determined at the February meeting. A new Corporate Leadership model is being looked at. Food waste sacks are in low supply at the council, although the Clerk reported that locals stocks are currently good.

Cllr. Morgan then left the meeting room at 8.35pm

3113. Financial Matters (for consideration or report)

3113.1 To receive the Summary of Accounts to date. This includes transactions since December meeting.

Date	Barclays Business Reserve Account	Transaction Detail	Amount In	Amount Out	Balance
12-Dec-23	Balance				28,106.14
29-Dec-23	Transferred to Unity Trust Savings (20492960)			15,000.00	13,106.14
02-Jan-24	Transferred to Unity Trust Savings (20492960)			13,106.14	-
			0.00	28,106.14	-
Date	Unity Trust Instant Access Account	Transaction Detail	Amount In	Amount Out	Balance
30-Nov-23	Balance				-
29-Dec-23	Transferred from Barclays Business Reserve		15,000.00	0.00	15,000.00
31-Dec-23	Interest		3.39	0.00	15,003.39
02-Jan-24	Transferred from Barclays Business Reserve		13,106.14	0.00	28,109.53
			28,109.53	0.00	28,109.53

Date	Barclays Community Account	Transaction Detail	Amount In	Amount Out	Balance
12/12/2023	Balance				5,214.47
13/12/2023	December Debits (#119, 125, 126, 129)			1,224.62	3,989.85
15/12/2023	December Debit (#117)			25.20	3,964.65
18/12/2023	December Debit (#121-123)			46.76	3,917.89
19/12/2023	December Debits (#118, 120)			225.64	3,692.25
21/12/2023	December Debit (#128)			35.00	3,657.25
27/12/2023	Outstanding Debit (#111)			21.95	3,635.30
29/12/2023	Transferred to Unity Trust Current Account (20492957)			3,635.30	0.00
			0.00	5,214.47	0.00

Date	Unity Trust Current Account	Transaction Detail	Amount In	Amount Out	Balance
29/11/2023	Balance				-
29/12/2023	Transferred from Barclays Community Account		3,635.30		3,635.30
31/12/2023	Service Charge			1.17	3,634.13
08/01/2023	Outstanding Debits (#124)			21.95	3,612.18
08/01/2023	January Debits (#131-#148)			2,392.48	1,219.70
			3,635.30	2,415.60	1,219.70

3113.2 Summary of Payments for January

Ref:	Updated/Outstanding Payments	Payee	Method	Net	VAT	Gross
#130	Deposit to new Unity Trust Bank Account (UNCASHED)		CQ 101634	0		0
	Sub Total			0		0

Ref:	January	Payee	Method	Net	VAT	Gross
#131	A&J Lighting Solutions		DD	21.00	4.20	25.20
#132	Npower		DD	75.08	3.75	78.83
#133	Mrs J Bannerman (Salary/Allowance)		BACS	846.61		846.61
#134	Nest Pension (Employer £48.87 , Employee £78.19)		DD	127.06		127.06
#135-	Barclaycard		DD	72.74	8.82	81.56
#143	Topsource Worldwide Uk Ltd (Eslip) Payroll		DD	18.29	3.66	21.95
#144	Woodham Walter Village Hall (Walter's December x2)		BACS	45.00		45.00
#145	HMRC		BACS	1049.10		1049.10
#146	Assoc. Local Council Clerks Membership		BACS	50.00		50.00
#147	National Allotment Society Membership		BACS	55.00	11.00	66.00
#148	Unity Trust Service Charge		DD	1.17		1.17
	Sub Total			2,361.05	31.43	2,392.48
	Total			2,361.05	31.43	2,392.48

Date	Barclaycard Payments (Statement 21/12/23)	Net	VAT	Gross
21/11/2023	Post office (Stamps)	6.00	0.00	6.00
24/11/2023	Fasthosts (Mailbox Clerk)	5.43	1.09	6.52
02/12/2023	Fasthosts (Mailbox)	27.75	5.55	33.30
06/12/2023	Fasthosts (Linus PHP)	5.78	1.16	6.94
06/12/2023	Walter's Soup Lunch	16.93	0.00	16.93
07/12/2023	Walter's Soup Lunch	2.65	0.44	2.21
		64.54	8.24	71.90

Date	Barclaycard Payments (Scheduled January)	Net	VAT	Gross
24/12/2023	Fasthosts (Mailbox Clerk)	5.43	1.09	6.52
28/12/2023	Amazon (Paper)	18.30	3.65	21.95
02/01/2024	Fasthosts (Mailbox)	27.75	5.55	33.30
06/01/2024	Fasthosts (Linus PHP)	5.78	1.16	6.94
		57.26	11.45	68.71

The BACS payments for January will be drawn up by the Parish Clerk and require authorisation by two councillor signatories by Payment Date of 11th January 2024.

3113.3 Review of Bank Statements (Barclays and Unity Trust), Credit Card Statements and Account sheets for December. Cllr. Brown confirmed that he had reviewed the documents and found them to be reconciled correctly.

3113.4 Banking - To report progress of opening of the new bank accounts and update banking and financial policies.

The Unity Trust current and instant access bank accounts have now been opened. The Current Account Switch service transferred balances to the Unity Trust Current Account and the Barclays Bank Current Account was closed on 29th December. All monies in the Barclays Business Reserve Account have been transferred to the Unity Trust Instant Access account. A letter was signed to notify Barclays that the Business Reserve Account should also be closed and that any interest accrued be paid to the Unity Trust Account. It was noted that the transfer including all direct debits and other regular payment details to Unity Trust had been smooth and efficient.

To adopt amended Banking Policy, Financial Risk Assessment and Investment Strategy to reflect the change in Banking as well as confirming that other Financial Policies have been reviewed.

RESOLVED: Cllr. John Brown proposed and Cllr. John Tompkins seconded that the policies be adopted. All Councillors in agreement.

3113.5 Grant Applications

(a) Research required re: goal posts/noticeboard/memorial garden signs - on-going. It was noted that the Clerk will attend a "Meet The Funder Event" organised by Maldon CVS at the end of January.

(b) To receive any applications from local organisations – await further information from Allotment Association

3113.6 To approve the 2024/25 Budget Considerations and Precept request.

Having carefully examined the budget and considered all expenditure and any areas where costs can be mitigated as well as taking into account the current inflation rate; in order to maintain adequate reserves over the next 3 years, the proposal is to raise the precept by 9%. The increase of 9% is forecast to be required over the next 3 years but this will be reviewed year on year. (See Appendix 1)

The Precept request will therefore be, £31,245.00. This equates to a Band D figure of £113.29 (up £8.15 on last year).

RESOLVED the motion above was moved by Cllr. John Tompkins and seconded by Cllr. John Brown and all councillors voted in favour of the motion.

It was noted that discussions and a range of figures had been used to determine the budget, precept and reserves which has incorporated conservative inflation figures. If less than a 9% increase had been allocated the recommended reserves for a council of our size would have disappeared over 3 years.

It was noted that inflation levels mean that the reserve buys less so it may need to be increased in the future.

It was noted that the Council Tax Base Figure varies each year and this also has an impact on the Band D costs.

The summary forecast closing balances document is attached to these minutes and full budget documents will be available to view on the website.

3114. Other Council Matters (for consideration or report)

3114.1 Community Engagement Team (CET). The December report is awaited.

3114.2 Woodham Walter Common – Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT). There were no updates to report.

3114.3 Climate Action. There were no updates to report.

3114.4 Allotments Report. There were no updates to report.

3114.5 Parish & Town Council Forum – The notes from the meeting had been shared with Councillors. The Chairman/Clerk had found the meeting useful.

During a discussion about the LDP they were able to raise the point about Green Energy Policy (for example in order to regulate the number of solar farms) and planning officers acknowledged that this is something they will be working on.

During a discussion about NHS services, they were able to raise Woodham Walter Parishioners concerns with challenges associated with making appointments at the Danbury surgery. It was acknowledged that this is a problem and that consultations are ongoing as regards how to improve ease of access.

3115. Highways, Transport & Infrastructure (for consideration or report)

3115.1 Various matters on-going as detailed in the Highways log.

3115.2 The hole which appeared on the Rectory Road verge has been reported and works are scheduled to make safe.

3115.3 The rotten Mead Pastures street sign has been reported to MDC who will replace.

3116. Local Issues (for consideration or report)

3116.1 Bell Meadow & Memorial Garden

(a) Football Goals - ongoing

(b) Playground Report – no information to report

- (c) Memorial Garden – the Remembrance soldier is due to be removed and stored.
- (d) County Broadband – await response.
RESOLVED that assuming the agreement is returned as per revision agreed and submitted (Minute ref: 3097.1d), the agreement shall be signed by two councillor's with the Clerk/RFO as witness. (Standing Order 23)
- (e) There were no further updates

3116.2 Footpaths Report. Cllr. Warren reported that it had been a busy few weeks with the wind and rain resulting in various issues around the Parish. He has dealt with some smaller trees and branches.
FP36 (The Street to Wilderness) landslip – the landowner has done some remedial work and plans to return in the spring.
FP 36 (The Street to Wilderness) there is a fallen tree blocking the path, the landowner is uncontactable so this has been reported to ECC Highways.

FP19 (Allotments to Wilderness) this was blocked by a fallen tree which has since been removed.

FP22 (Blue Mill to Wilderness) the rotten fingerpost has been reported.

BR31 (Spring Elms to Woodham Walter Common) a large tree fell but has since been removed. A large hole close to the bridge has been reported to Highways.

3116.3 School Report – Representative on Governing Body – Cllr. Symons reported that groups of children had helped with the planting of a wildlife corridor. 1000 hedge plants were planted along the track leading to the water pumping station with the kind permission of the landowner and volunteers organised by Chris Wheadon. It had been a successful day with lots of mud to enjoy. The next Governors meeting is at the end of January.

3116.4 Crime Reports/Neighbourhood Watch Report.

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

3116.5 Litter

- (a) February litter pick date will be 10th or 17th February (weather dependent)

3116.6 Walter's Third Thursday Café

- (a) Thursday 4th January 2024 – Soup Lunch (this was cancelled as there were insufficient guests)

- (b) Thursday 18th January – Community Hub

3117. 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 Winter Service Community Guide |
| c) Warbler | d) Meet the Funder Event |
| e) Family tree enquiry | f) Visit Essex Survey |

3118. Points of Information/Items for future agenda

3118.1 Cllr. James Rushton asked that a discussion and recommendations be brought to the next meeting which will look at ways the Parish Council can be more efficient and mitigate the length of meetings.

3119. Date of Next Parish Council Meeting:

Next scheduled Ordinary Parish Council - Monday 12th February 2024 at 8pm in Woodham Walter Women's Club.

3120. The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.10pm.

Signed

Dated

Appendix 1: Minute Ref: 3113.6

Parish Council Forecast Closing Balances		Forecast	Budget	Budget	Budget	Usage notes
			9.00%	9.00%	9.00%	Suggested percentage increase to the precept
				5.00%	5.00%	Estimated costs inflation
£	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	
Opening Balance	17,575.00	23,791.46	20,839.77	18,471.12	16,283.58	The first year is actual, the rest are calculated.
Receipts Precept	26,000.00	28,665.00	31,244.85	34,056.89	37,122.01	Enter the total budget or forecast receipts (Precept).
Receipts Other	9,830.00	4,686.34	905.00			Enter the total budget or forecast receipts (other)
Payments (-)	- 29,614.00	- 36,303.03	- 34,518.50	- 36,244.43	- 38,056.65	Enter the total budget or forecast payments, including VAT.
Closing Balance	23,791.00	20,839.77	18,471.12	16,283.58	15,348.94	Calculated
Allocation:						
Specified Reserves		633.32	3,122.77	1,600.00	2,200.00	Enter the total of any known reserves.
General Fund	23,791.46	20,206.45	15,348.35	14,683.58	13,148.94	Calculated
Expected closing balance	23,791.46	20,839.77	18,471.12	16,283.58	15,348.94	
Tax base figure from Maldon DC	271.90	272.10	275.30	275.30	275.30	As supplied by Maldon District Council
Band D council tax	95.62	105.35	113.49	123.71	134.84	How much a typical household will pay per year
Increase per household for the year	8.29	9.72	8.15	10.21	11.13	
<p>Having carefully examined the budget and considered all expenditure and any areas where costs can be mitigated as well as taking into account the current inflation rate, in order to maintain adequate reserves over the next 3 years, the proposal which councillors will need to decide on is to raise the precept by 9%. The increase of 9% is forecast to be required over the next 3 years but this will be reviewed year on year.</p> <p>The precept request will therefore be: £31, 245.00. This equates to a Band D figure of £113.49 (up £8.15 on last year).</p>						