

MINUTES

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Woodham Walter Parish Council.

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

Monday 11th December 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)

County Councillor Jane Fleming (in attendance from 8.20pm until 9.30pm)

Pippa Edlin (Head of Woodham Walter Primary School) (in attendance until 8.20pm)

Public: None

3081. Welcome Cllr. Rushton welcomed those present to the meeting.

3082. To report, approve and record apologies for absence

RESOLVED to accept apologies received from District Cllr's Simon Morgan and Mark Durham.

3083. 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. Joanna Symons declared an ORI as she is a governor at Woodham Walter Primary School.

Cllr. James Rushton declared that his wife is a school governor at Woodham Walter Primary School. Cllr. John Tompkins declared that his grandchildren attend East Hanningfield School.

3084. Public Forum

There were no members of the public present.

3085. To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 13th November 2023.

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

3086. Matters Arising - Progress report (not for resolution)

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

3087. Woodham Walter Primary School – to welcome Head of School Pippa Edlin

Mrs Edlin reported that there are now 110 pupils at the school and this will increase to 112 in January.

Mrs Edlin indicated that the school would like to develop relationships and involve the children in village life such as the recent visit to Walter's Café. Some of the children are due to help with a hedge planting project organised by Essex Wildlife Trust and a local farmer.

The school is in the consultation phase of becoming a Federation with East Hanningfield and All Saints Schools which will formalise an existing partnership. The partnership brings many advantages including that the children can mix with a wider group of peers, creating friendships which will help them as they progress to secondary school. They were able to join with East Hanningfield for the Year 6 residential trip. The staff benefit in their professional development. The 3 schools can pool resources which creates cost savings. The schools benefit from the expertise of the Executive Head Teacher who works across all 3 schools.

Q: How will the Federation impact on the governance. Currently there is a local board of governors which will be devolved to one group across all 3 schools with Advisory Committees.

Mrs Edlin responded that each school will have local Advisory Groups who will have devolved powers and each school will be represented on the main board. Each school budget will remain individual and will not be devolved.

Q: How will an Ofsted inspection work?

Mrs Edlin reported that the main board representative from Woodham Walter and the Advisory Committee will talk to Ofsted.

Q: The Federation document appears very positive. Could it result in Woodham Walter school developing further, e.g. attracting more pupils.

Mrs Edlin responded that currently year groups are set at 17 and technically this could increase to 20 but she did not anticipate any further expansion.

The Chairman commented that when the children had attended Walter's Café they were very impressive. He thanked Mrs Edlin for attending the meeting and she then left the meeting room at 8.20pm.

Councillors commented that it would be useful to ascertain how the Advisory Committee are going to be set out. For example currently the Parish Council has a seat on the Board of Governors. It is unknown if there is any legislation which indicates there should be a parish representative.

RESOLVED that Cllr. Symons will make enquiries.

3088. Planning – APPLICATIONS RECEIVED (for consideration or report)

3088.1 23/01129/HOUSE The Cottage, Bassetts Lane

S73A application for the construction of fence and native species of hedge within front garden.

RESOLVED to write that there are no objections but to comment that the works have resulted in a loss of openness which affects the arcadian character of the village in this location.

3088.2 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.

The following is a summary of the comments:

- Rear extension doesn't harmonise with the front aspect.
- Long vistas from West Bowers Road and Footpath 5 are adversely impacted by the proposed development
- NPPF takes beauty into consideration. The design is not considered attractive and is not in keeping.
- The Heritage Asset is adversely impacted by the proposal.
- Roof pitches are differing, it is not an organic development.

RESOLVED to recommend refusal of the applications.

3088.3 No further applications had been received.

3089. Planning – DECISIONS (for consideration or report)

3089.1 23/00968/PACUAR Highfields, Bassetts Lane REFUSE (Delegated)

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

3089.2 23/00897/HOUSE The Cottage, Bassetts Lane APPROVE (Delegated)

Proposed widening of drive at junction with Bassetts Lane.

3089.3 23/00935/TCA Brookside, The Street ALLOWED TO PROCEED (Delegated)

T4 Poplar – Re-pollard by 8m

3089.4 23/10136/SCR Land East of Tom Tit Lane, Woodham Mortimer EIA NOT REQUIRED (Delgated)

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

3089.5 Decisions are awaited on the following applications:

- (a) 23/00762/FUL Woodham Walter Primary School (Agreed Expiry deadline updated to 20/12/23)
- (b) 23/00992/HOUSE Dabblers, Little Baddow Road (Determination deadline 15/12/23)
- (c) 23/01045/HOUSE Summerfield, Spring Elms Lane (Determination deadline 22/12/23)
- (d) 23/01025/FUL The Rookery, Lodge Farm (Determination deadline 22/12/23)

3090. Planning - Enforcement

3090.1 There were no updates to report.

3091. Other Planning Matters (for consideration or report)

3091.1 Medium/Small Village classification – await response to query

3091.2 Historic complaint to MDC remains extant– await meeting date. Cllr. Morgan had reported that a date should be arranged soon.

3091.3 Housing Needs Survey / VDS- Parish Plans-NHP

To consider information and any actions following meeting with RCCE.

Cllr. Rushton summarised the information gained at the meeting as per the report/information circulated to councillors.

The following is a summary of comments regarding Housing Needs Survey.

- The costs involved would not benefit most people in the village so the budget impact cannot be justified
- It would be a way of understanding how villagers feel about additional housing
- There are strong settlement boundaries and therefore no suitable locations for a housing scheme if a housing needs survey finds a demand.
- There are insufficient services in the village. It is not a sustainable location.
- Land values dictate that a development would not receive sufficient return to make it viable.
- There are lots of differences in the definitions of affordable housing.
- We would be able to control if we have the information. The village can't stay the same forever.
- Stronger by sticking to defined settlement areas.
- Could consider a more informal survey to see if there is a demand for a full survey

RESOLVED not to progress with a Housing Needs Survey, but to wait and consider again in the future depending on other changes such as government policies.

RESOLVED that a Neighbourhood Plan is not suitable for Woodham Walter.

RESOLVED that more consideration should be given to whether a Parish Plan would be advantageous.

3091.4 Solar Farm – It was noted that Lightsource BP had responded to questions raised.

RESOLVED no further action until the receipt of the application.

RESOLVED to ask the District Council if there are plans for a Renewable Energy Policy.

3091.5 Coupa Query – response received. The Parish Council had not appreciated that the application to regularise the Coupa decision, had effectively superseded and cancelled the original COUPA decision.

3092. Climate Action - Chairman reported that a joint meeting being organised by Claire Williamson from MDC had clashed with the Parish Council Meeting.

3093. To receive reports of the County and District Councillor’s.

Cllr. Jane Fleming reported that a Full Council Meeting is due this week including a motion regarding a 20mph speed limit. £121 million has been awarded for road maintenance (until 2034).

Civic Amenity Sites booking consultation has closed. There were 18,000 responses and the results will be due in the New year.

Comments were made with regards to road haunching (where metalling finishes at the edge of the road) which creates a hazard for motorists.

There will be a roll out of LED replacements to ECC Street Lights across Maldon in the New Year. It was noted that local parishes such as Woodham Walter are not included in this scheme.

Cllr. Fleming then left the meeting room at 9.30pm

3094. Financial Matters (for consideration or report) (ESTIMATE)

3094.1 To receive the Summary of Accounts to date. This includes transactions since November meeting.

Date	Business Reserve Account	Transaction Detail	Amount In	Amount Out	Balance
13-Nov-23	Balance				34783.11
16-Nov-23	Transferred to Community Account (Nov Debits)			3300.00	31483.11
21-Nov-23	Transferred to Community Account (Unity Trust)		0.00	500.00	30983.11
04-Dec-23	Interest Received		123.03	0.00	31106.14
13-Dec-23	Transferred to Community Account (Dec Debits)		0.00	3000.00	28106.14
			123.03	3800.00	28106.14
Date	Community Account	Transaction Detail	Amount In	Amount Out	Balance
13/11/2023	Balance				963.23

16/11/2023	Transferred from Business Reserve Account (Nov Debits)	3300.00		4263.23
15/11/2023	November Debits (#105-#110 Barclaycard)		114.75	4148.48
17/11/2023	Deposit (WV Village Lunch Donation/Book Mark Sales)	144.00	0.00	4292.48
21/11/2023	November Debits (#100-#104,#112-#115)		2498.03	1794.45
21/11/2023	Transferred from Business Reserve Account (Unity Trust Deposit)	500.00		2294.45
24/11/2023	Top Source Outstanding DD (#75 #98)		43.90	2250.55
30/11/2023	Outstanding Debits (#111, #116, #130)		556.95	1693.60
13/12/2023	Transferred from Business Reserve Account (Dec Debits)	3000.00		4693.60
13/12/2023	December Debits		1580.25	3113.35
		6944.00	4793.88	3113.35

RESOLVED to accept the summary of accounts.

3094.2 Summary of Payments for December.

Ref:	Updated/Outstanding Payments	Payee	Method	Net	VAT	Gross
#111	Topsource Worldwide Uk Ltd (Eslip) Payroll		DD	18.29	3.66	21.95
#116	The Poppy Appeal (Royal British Legion)		CQ 101633	35.00	0.00	35.00
#130	Deposit to new Unity Trust Bank Account		CQ 101634	500.00	0.00	500.00
	Sub Total			53.29	3.66	556.95
Ref:	December Payee		Method	Net	VAT	Gross
#117	A&J Lighting Solutions		DD	21.00	4.20	25.20
#118	Npower		DD	72.98	3.65	76.63
#119	Mrs J Bannerman (Salary/Allowance)		BACS	827.12	0.00	827.12
#120	Nest Pension (Employer £57.3 , Employee £91.70)		DD	149.01	0.00	149.01
#121- #123	Barclaycard		DD	38.96	7.80	46.76
#124	Topsource Worldwide Uk Ltd (Eslip) Payroll		DD	18.29	3.66	21.95
#125	Woodham Walter Village Hall (Walter's November)		BACS	22.50	0.00	22.50
#126	Skippers Ground Maintenance		BACS	160.00	32.00	192.00
#127	HMRC (Interest Payment)		BACS	1.08	0.00	1.08
#128	Information Commissioners Office		DD	35.00	0.00	35.00
#129	SLCC Membership Renewal		BACS	183.00	0.00	183.00
	Sub Total			1528.94	51.31	1580.25
	Total			1582.23	54.97	2137.20

Date	Barclaycard Payments (Statement 21/11/23)	Net	VAT	Gross
24/10/2023	Fasthosts (Mailbox Clerk)	5.43	1.09	6.52
02/11/2023	Fasthosts (Mailbox)	27.75	5.55	33.30
06/11/2023	Fasthosts (Linus PHP)	5.78	1.16	6.94
		38.96	7.80	46.76

Date	Barclaycard Payments (Scheduled December)	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

The BACS payments for December will be drawn up by the Parish Clerk and require authorisation by councillor signatory by Payment Date of 13th December 2023.

Please note there will be a higher than usual balance in the current account as part of the contingency for Current Account Switch to Unity Trust Bank on 15th December 2023.

RESOLVED to approve the payments as listed in the schedule.

3094.3 Review of Bank Statements, Credit Card Statements and Account sheets for October and November.
Cllr. Brown confirmed that he had reviewed the documents and found them to be reconciled correctly.

3094.4 Banking - To report on the progress of opening of the new bank accounts.

The Unity Trust current and instant access bank accounts have now been opened. The signatories remain as Cllr. James Rushton, Cllr. John Tompkins and Cllr. Jenny Hughes. They have authority to authorise payments but cannot set up payments. Unity Trust requires 2 signatories to log in and authorise payments. The Clerk/RFO has authority to transfer funds between the accounts and set up the payments but is not an authorised signatory.

The automated current account switch service is due to take place on 15th December (so the December BACS payments will be made in advance of this through Barclays) and will remain in place for 36 months.
The savings account will require us to transfer funds manually as the switch service does not operate for savings accounts.

Banking and Financial Policies will be reviewed to reflect the change ready to adopt at the January meeting.

3094.5 Grant Applications

- (a) Research required re: goal posts/noticeboard/memorial garden signs - on-going
- (b) To receive any applications from local organisations – await further information from Allotment Association who are the only local group to submit an application.

3094.6 2024/25 Draft Budget Considerations

The Clerk reported that the draft budget is progressing within the new Scribe Accounting system and will be ready for final review at the January meeting where the precept will also be set. There will be an opportunity for Councillors to review the accounts in detail prior to the January meeting.

It was noted that there will be no referendum principles for Parish Councils for 2024/25.

Maldon District Council had written with the Tax Base Figure for 2024/25 and highlighted a mistake that they had made over the last 2 years. The mistake amounts to £358.28 for Woodham Walter which they will recoup by adjusting the tax base figure for 2024/25.

RESOLVED to write to the council and challenge the adjustment as it is considered extremely unfortunate and unfair that their mistake will effectively result in increased council tax demands for residents.

3095. Other Council Matters (for consideration or report)

3095.1 Community Engagement Team (CET)

- (a) November Report noted. The TRUCam monitoring had resulted in 12 reported offences.

3095.2 Woodham Walter Common – Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT)

- (a) There were no updates to report.
- (b) It was noted that EWT currently have a land acquisition appeal to purchase half of Fir Tree Wood in Little Baddow. It is understood that this is a joint project with Little Baddow Parish Council who have already received pledges to cover the purchase of the other half.

3095.3 Allotments Report – there was no information to report.

3095.4 Annual Staff Review – to receive report of Staffing Committee.

Agenda item 15.4 was held in closed session. The Press and Public to be excluded due to the confidential nature of business. (Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) 1960, s1(20) AND Local Government Act 1972, s100 (2)).

RESOLVED to accept the report.

3095.5 Parish & Town Council Forum – Clerk/Chairman to attend on 14th December

3096. Highways, Transport & Infrastructure (for consideration or report)

3096.1 Various matters on-going as detailed in the Highways log.

3097. Local Issues (for consideration or report)

3097.1 Bell Meadow & Memorial Garden

- (a) Football Goals
 - Clerk/Cllr. Bunn will meet to try and find anchors with metal detector.
- (b) Playground Report
 - Graffiti on slide/slide frame. Mostly removed. Some further work required.

- (c) Memorial Garden
 - No Parking Signs – Grant funding options on-going – application submitted as below.
- (d) County Broadband – To consider proposed contract/wayleave payment. To note that no further payment has been offered as part of the wayleave. However, on their advice, an application has been made to their Hypercharged Foundation.
RESOLVED to submit the amended contract/wayleave document.
- (e) Skippers have rotavated the Wildflower Area.
- (f) There were no further updates

3097.2 Footpaths Report. Cllr. Warren reported that the damaged Footpaths Bridges on FP4 & FP14 had both been repaired. It was noted that the bridge on FP14 is due for replacement next summer. A reminder that a New Year's Day village walk has been organised.

3097.3 School Report – Representative on Governing Body – Cllr.Symons (See minute ref: 3087)

3097.4 Crime Reports/Neighbourhood Watch Report.

- (a) Various reports and newsletters shared (none specific to WW)
- (b) Local report of burglary at Blue Mill Lane.
- (c) The village Neighbourhood Watch group had provided a report which had been shared via the village email.

3097.5 Litter

- (a) Fly tip reported at Tom Tit Lane

3097.6 Walter's Third Thursday Café

- (a) Thursday 16th November – Year 6 children attended to talk about their recent residential trip, this was well received by the guests and children. Maldon CVS provided Slipper Upgrades to 7 residents.
- (b) Winter Soup Lunch – Thursday 7th December attended by 11 people. It is hoped that more will support the next soup lunch on Thursday 4th January.
- (c) Thursday 21st December – coffee with mince pies
- (d) MCVS Community Supermarket – interest expressed.

3097.7 Bell Meadow Village Association – Cllr. Rushton reported that the committee are keen to organise another event in 2024 but that they are concerned about getting enough volunteers. They will come up with a list of roles which need to be fulfilled and seek volunteers.

3098. Correspondence – Various items of correspondence have been received and shared with Councillors and where appropriate the public via the website and village emails.

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|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a) Essex Fire & Rescue Annual Report | b) D-Day 80 Anniversary Guide |
| c) EALC County Update November | d) Essex Police Newsletters |
| e) ECC Electoral Boundary Review | f) Maldon Police Bulletin |
| g) Warbler December | h) Community Food Hub Notes |
| i) Burnham Christmas Day Dinner | j) Essex Food Programme |
| k) Fir Tree Wood | l) Community Wardrobe |
| m) One Maldon District Hub | n) Oyster Magazine |
| o) Christmas Card from Priti Patel MP | |

3099. Points of Information/Items for future agenda

3100. Date of Next Parish Council Meeting:

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

3101. The Chairman closed the meeting at 10.10pm.

Signed

Dated