

Woodham Walter Report April 2023—March 2024



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Woodham Walter Parish Council

From the Chairman, Councillor James Rushton



I am pleased to introduce Woodham Walter Parish Council's Report for the year April 2023 – March 2024 and to invite you to the Annual Parish Meeting to be held on Tuesday, 16th April at 7pm in the Village Hall. We hope that as many residents as possible will attend what is an important annual village gathering.

By way of introduction, the composition of the Parish Council has remained unchanged over the past year. The Council comprises John Brown

(Vice Chairman) who has very valuably brought his experience to bear on IT issues and on the installation of a new finance system; James Bunn; Jenny Hughes; Joanna Symons (representing the Parish Council as a Governor at the Primary School); John Tompkins (whose expertise in matters of planning and design continues to be such an appreciated asset); and Peter Warren (who as our Footpaths and Tree Officer relentlessly pounds those paths through the Village, ensuring that all is

in good order by reporting on issues that need to be addressed by Essex County Council or local landowners). I am responsible to the Council for the allotments. Everyone contributes their own very considerable individual skills and knowledge to the Parish community, and I would like to thank everyone for their wholehearted commitment and for the time that they give on a voluntary basis.



Parish Council Chairman
Councillor James Rushton

Annual Parish Meeting - Tuesday 16th April 2024

All Woodham Walter residents are invited to attend the

Annual Parish Meeting

On Tuesday 16th April 2024 at 7pm

Woodham Walter Village Hall

- Matters Arising from Annual Parish Reports
- Public Forum

This is your meeting. Come along and raise any village matters or ideas.



Woodham Walter Parish Council - Chairman, James Rushton

Our Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer – and our one employee - is Jacky Bannerman. Jacky has held this position since 2006. It is still a part-time role – perhaps that is surprising to many, given the presence and profile that Jacky has in Woodham Walter – but, remarkably, it is. But it is true that the hours do continue to increase because of the changing demands of the role. Without Jacky the Parish Council could not operate and serve the Village as it does, and, as I said last year, we are very fortunate to have the benefit of Jacky’s guidance and expertise. Much of what Jacky does may not be seen – for instance, this year the successful bedding-in of our new finance system and moving our banking away from Barclays to Unity Trust. And the publication of this comprehensive Annual Report is far and beyond what many Parish Councils produce – recognition of the extent to which both Jacky and Parish Council believe that you should have a full and detailed view of Council and village activity, and in a format that ensures that it is accessible by everyone here. But Jacky is also very



visible in the village and her commitment extends far beyond the pure administration of Council affairs. I am sure that everyone will join with me in thanking Jacky for all that she has done over the past year.

Finally, we acknowledge the important roles that our Essex County Councillor, Jane Fleming, and our Maldon District Councillors, Simon Morgan and Mark Durham, representing the Wickham Bishops and Woodham Ward, play in attending Parish Council meetings and being accessible for their advice, a key part in the three-way communication between Parish, District and County. We are fortunate to have representatives who know the village, the area and its environment so well.

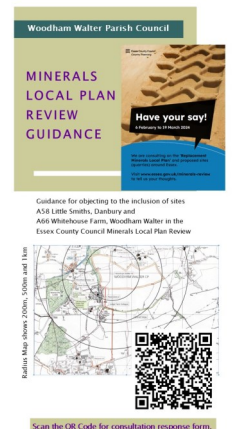
Our role in the planning process is a vital function of the Parish Council, since we represent the views of those who know the Village and its rural environment best, and we seek to convey those views with clarity and emphasis to Maldon District Council. The Woodham Walter Village Design Statement was launched in 2017 and adopted that year by Maldon District Council. It is often re-

ferred to in planning decisions. Cllr Tompkins continues to oversee the updating of the VDS in order to take account of changes in the planning environment since 2017, and with an ear to the ongoing discussions at governmental level on the revision of the National Planning Policy Framework. The VDS plays a vital role in obtaining decisions that are appropriate to the Village.

That role is also the principal consumer of time, for Jacky and for the Parish Council - ie the consultation on, and consideration and administration of, our response to planning applications in all forms. These range across a wide spectrum of permissions as outlined in the analysis below. What is immediately apparent is that the number of applications to which the Parish Council has responded in 2023/24 has doubled in relation to last year, and the workload has increased in proportion.



L-R Cllr. James Rushton, Parish Clerk Jacky Bannerman receiving the Local Council Award Scheme Foundation certificate from Cllr. Peter Davey of the Essex Association of Local Councils.



Woodham Walter Parish Council - Chairman, James Rushton

In response to that increasing workload, we have established a formal policy allowing for the introduction of Working Groups (a) to ease the increasing length of Parish Council meetings by preparing recommendations outside the meetings themselves, and (b) to enable residents to be directly involved both in the more substantial issues requiring the Council’s attention and also in new initiatives for which the expertise and energy of individuals in the village is invaluable. As an example, most recently and still ongoing at the time of writing, with John Tompkins lead-

ing for the Parish Council, what seems like the whole village has become involved in voicing its objection to the promotion of two sites in Woodham Walter in the Essex County Council Minerals Local Plan Review consultation. More on this below – but our thanks to the many volunteers who have stepped forward on this, in particular Mark Clayton, Tim Lodge, Geoff Hicks, Richard Sandlan and Charlie Maddy.

In last year’s report I wrote about our concerns with the efficiency of Maldon District Council’s Enforcement

team and also what we saw as a lack of joined-up thinking across the different Planning teams. Correspondence and conversations continue. Those concerns relate not only to the slowness of MDC in addressing serious breaches of planning law or of conditions applied to planning approvals but also to the evident lack of communication between Planning Officers and the Enforcement team which have led to contracted planning conditions being determined to be unenforceable when breaches occur.

Planning Summary 2023/2024

PARISH COUNCIL		
RECOMMENDATIONS		
YEAR	22/23	23/24
Support/Approve	5	9
Object/Refusal	4	8
Comments	3	12
No Comment	3	0
EIA	0	1

MALDON DISTRICT COUNCIL		
DECISIONS		
YEAR	22/23	23/24
Approve	8	19
Refuse	5	5
Withdrawn	0	1
EIA not required	0	1
To Be Decided	2	4

Total Applications:

2023/24: 30

2022/23: 15

2021/22: 19

Decision contrary to WWPC:

2023/24 : 4

2022/23: 7

2021/22: 3

Type of Application	22/23	23/24	Type of Application	22/23	23/24
Extension	4	9	New Drive/Alteration to Drive/Gates	1	2
S73A application	0	2	Extension to garden area	0	1
Claims for Lawful Development Certificate—Annexe	1	0	Change of use from agricultural to playing field	0	1
Conservation Area Approval	2	0	Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Opinion	0	1
Change of use from agricultural to dwelling house	1	2	Trees: TPO (Preservation Order) TCA (Conservation Area)	2	4
Lighting Column	0	1	Replacement Barn	1	0
Claims for Lawful Development Certificate—Campsite	0	1	New Classroom Claim for Lawful Development Certificate - Classroom	1	1
New or Replace or extend Cart Lodge or outbuilding	2	0	Outline—New dwellings	0	1
Alterations	0	3	Change of use to residential garden	0	1

Appeals responded to:

2023/24: 1

2022/23: 2

Enforcement Queries Raised:

2023/24: 2 (9 Historic cases chased up/remain unresolved).

2022/23: 5

Woodham Walter Parish Council - Chairman, James Rushton



Saunders – were lost in the last few months. They are irreplaceable, and our thoughts very much remain with their family and friends.

The sense and

A little bit of a theme of this report is that of ‘community’. Woodham Walter is no exception to the rule that the vitality of a village is very much dependent on the contribution of volunteers. The more, the merrier. In our case we are so fortunate to comprise so many organisations, groups and committees that contribute actively to the benefit of residents as a whole - for instance, St Michael’s Church, under the inspired leadership of Rev’d Julie Willmot, Woodham Walter Primary School (whose pupils presented so politely and confidently about their residential trip at a meeting of Walter’s Third Thursday Café last year and who are a credit to all involved at the School), Tadpoles Nursery, the revitalised Village Hall, the redecorated Women’s Club, the Bell Meadow Village Association, the Neighbourhood Watch group, the defibrillator team, Friends of St Michael’s, the Essex Wildlife Trust volunteers, and the Allotment Association, all of which have contributed to our Annual Report. And these are in addition to our two excellent pubs, two golf courses and Walter’s Café, as well as the asset of the Playground on Bell Meadow, which has become so well-used and a gathering point for parents (and for grandparents) with young children.

Sadly, three long-time residents who had contributed so much and in so many different ways to Woodham Walter over many, many years – Bill Warner, Wally Hicks and Geoff

the reality of the community is important to us all and vital to the health of Woodham Walter. Two notable examples of the tangible benefits of residents coming together in a common cause are Bell Meadow Day which will again be celebrated this year and could not happen without significant volunteer support; and the response to the Essex CC Minerals Review consultation, referred to above, which was generated out of the new Working Group policy, although the follow-up in terms of getting the word out could not have been as impactful without the large-scale volunteer response.

As a result it seems that many close contacts have been made in the village even amongst those who may live only a few hundred yards of each other but had not been in touch before. And perhaps the need to have a strong response from the village to this consultation has generated a greater understanding of why it is so important that we do act as a community and come together to protect the village and its locality. Indeed, I don’t think that individual concerns about the proximity to their homes of proposed development sites are generally at the foundation of village residents’ responses – although, rightly, some will have reason to object on that basis alone. Rather, the underlying reason for why we really need to ensure that our voice is heard loud and clear is the very future of the village as we know it.

Woodham Walter is an historic and increasingly rare type of village. Arcadian is the term often applied. In the Maldon District Design Guide, Arcadian villages have their own section; Woodham Walter is one of only six in the Maldon District and possibly the best preserved. We benefit from a number of the attributes of an Arcadian village – the layout of “small farmsteads, with cottages and modern houses present along rural lanes”; each has “its own specific but small historic core”; the individual character is “derived mostly from the qualities of the surrounding landscape and being in harmony with the natural environment”; and the Design Guide notes that “the Arcadian character has gradually been eroded [in some villages] by, for instance, the rebuilding of houses with a larger footprint than their relatively modest predecessors and the addition of larger groups or estates to the edges of the villages”. What isn’t referred to here but which the Parish Council seeks to protect are those long vistas – ie of open, characteristic countryside in which there are several, small but dispersed groups of housing, and of which there so many in our village. This is one of the principal reasons that the Parish Council does react strongly to such as the Bunsay Downs application and appeal in 2021/22 and the current promoted mineral extraction sites at Whitehouse Farm and Little Smiths, and why it has been so rewarding that the community has come together in their responses.

I am now handing over the role of Chair to Cllr. John Brown and send him all good wishes and support for the years ahead.

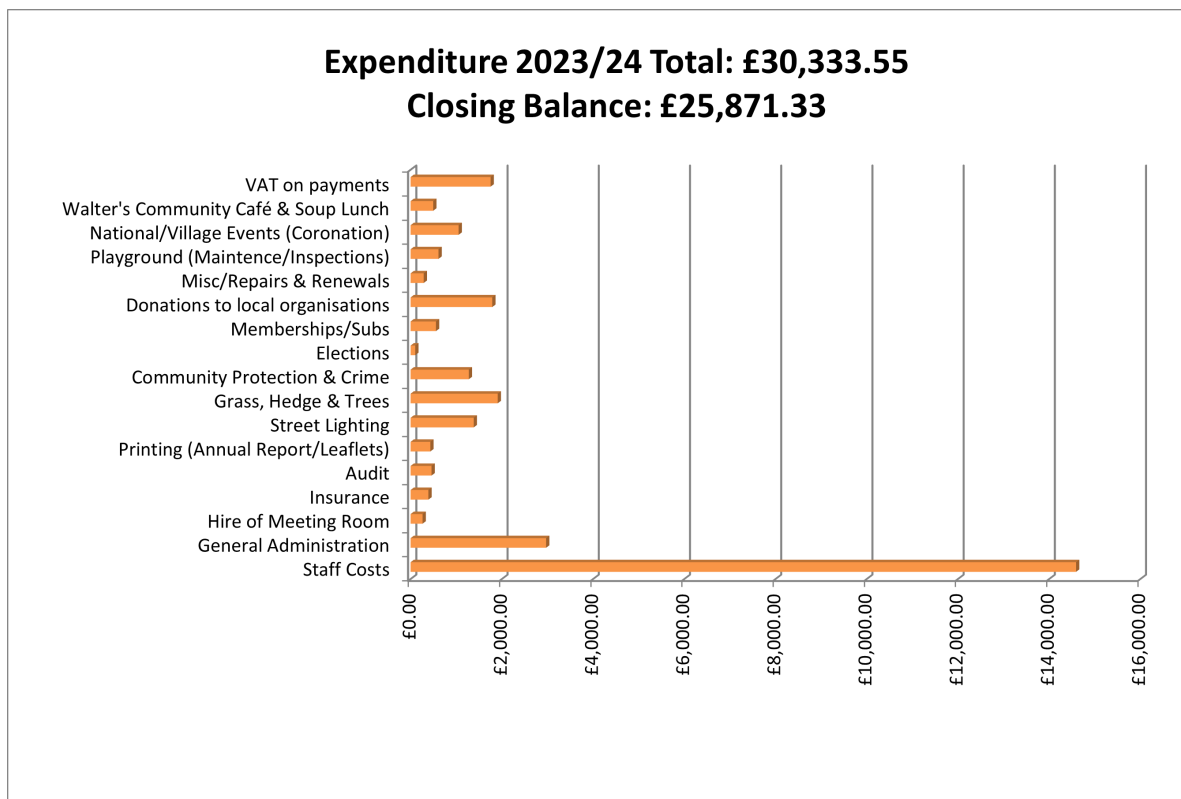
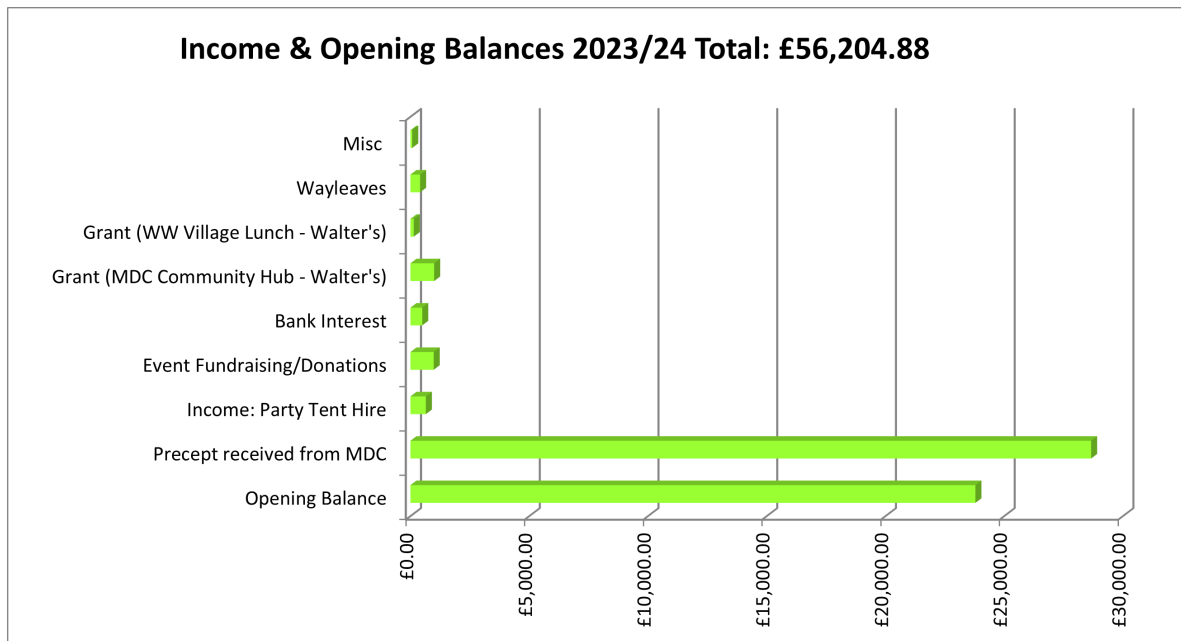


Woodham Walter Parish Council - Financial Overview

Parish Councils with an annual turnover below £25,000 have to adhere to the Transparency Code. As Woodham Walter now exceeds this threshold it surprisingly does not need to adhere to the same rules. However, we think it's important to continue to provide information for you to review.

Information is published on the Parish Council website so that parishioners can view financial documents, agendas and minutes in order to meet the Governments desire to place more power into citizens' hands to increase democratic accountability. Transparency gives local people the tools and information they need to hold local public bodies to account. The Parish Council accounts are subject to an external audit review and this is usually completed by the end of September. So have a look at the Parish Council website and see what you think! www.woodhamwalter-pc.gov.uk

Below are the estimated figures for 2022/23 financial year.



What do Parish Councils do?



Powers and duties

Parish councils have a large range of powers and activities. Woodham Walter Parish Council is involved in planning consultations, managing Bell Meadow, the playground, the Memorial Garden and the general care and upkeep of the village, including, liaising with Highways, street lighting, promoting the village and any other local issues.

We provide community funding to local organisations to help with maintenance including Woodham Walter Women's Club and Woodham Walter Village Hall Association. We give an annual grant to the Essex Wildlife Trust towards

their work managing Woodham Walter Common on our behalf.

How parish councils work

Parish councils are statutory bodies. Members are elected for a term of four years. 2023 was an election year and all our Parish Councillors were elected uncontested.

Parish Councils are funded principally by an annual precept. Income and expenditure for the next financial year are calculated in the form of estimates. The net amount (the precept) is added to council tax, collected by Maldon District Council (the principal authority) and paid to Woodham Walter Parish Council annually. Parish councils can apply for other funding such as grant and funding awards, but they do not receive funds direct from central government, as principal authorities do.

Woodham Walter Parish Council also receives income from the hire of the Party Tents. During 2023 we raised £650 in hiring income.

Councillors carefully examined the budget and considered all expenditure and any areas where costs can be mitigated as well as taking into account the rate of inflation. In order to maintain adequate reserves Councillors have agreed that the precept requirement for Woodham Walter in 2024/25 will be £31,245.00 which works out at £113.29 per Band D property for the year.



What do Parish Councillors do?

As a councillor you become a voice for your community. Parish Councils are the most local part of our democratic system and closest to the public. Councillors have three main areas of work:

1. Decision-making: through attending meetings and committees with other elected members, councillors decide which activities to support, where money should be spent, what services should be delivered and what policies should be implemented. Woodham Walter Parish Council meets on the 2nd Monday of the month at 8pm for approximately 2 hours.
2. Monitoring: councillors make sure that their decisions lead to efficient and effective services by keeping an eye on how well things are working.

3. Getting involved locally: as local representatives, councillors have responsibilities towards their constituents and local organisations. This often depends on what the councillor wants to achieve and how much time is available.

The work of a parish councillor may include:

- going to meetings of local organisations
- going to meetings of bodies that affect the wider community, such as the police, the Highways Authority, the local Council and schools
- taking up issues on behalf of members of the public.
- Neighbour consultations for planning applications.
- Inspections of Bell Meadow.

Being a parish councillor is an enjoyable way of contributing to your community and helping to make it a better place to live and work. Members of the community nominate candidates for election. All registered electors are encouraged to vote so that you can have a direct impact on the make up of the Parish Council which represents the local community of Woodham Walter.



Footpath Officer - Peter Warren



I've now completed 17 years as our Parish Footpath Officer and still enjoy the job of trying to ensure that our Parish paths are clear and safe to walk. I go for a walk most days (if it isn't raining!) and try to cover at least a couple of our Public Rights-of-Way on each walk. There are 28 footpaths and 5 bridleways in the Parish, those close to home are checked at least once each week whereas the ones further away I endeavour to check at least every month or two. Any problems that I can't easily rectify are referred to the appropriate farmer or landowner, mainly fallen trees. Other problems such as dodgy gates, stiles, bridges, fingerposts and waymark posts are logged on the ECC Highways online reporting system. Anything really urgent or dangerous is referred directly to Roy Read, the Rights of Way Inspector for this area. Roy has been most helpful and proactive resolving the issues that have arisen and attempts to be here within a day or two to personally inspect the problem and sometimes rolls up his sleeves and physically sorts out the problem himself! My thanks also go to the Maldon Ramblers who have also assisted with path clearance, bridge repairs and replacing fingerposts and waymarks in the Parish.

Despite a lot of wet and windy weather over the past year there haven't been too many issues on our paths and were a pleasure to

walk for most of the time. A lot of rain last March resulted in flooding down by the canal and one of the platform bridges on the new section of FP33 was swept off its anchorages. Last month's heavy rain has caused the same thing to happen again. Each time ECC Highways have done a prompt repair. This wet spring caused the weeds to grow rather too well and by June several paths were difficult to walk and a couple became impassable. The paths on the annual ECC cutting schedule were all done by late July and everywhere was good to walk again. Walking is still very popular in the Parish, with locals and visitors plus walking groups helping to keep the weeds trampled down. This, combined with the low rainfall last autumn, has kept most paths in good condition throughout the winter despite the recent rains.

Problems over the past year have included the usual crop of fingerposts and waymark posts that have rotted and fallen over or gone missing completely (presumably taken by people a bit short of firewood?). 8 have been replaced by ECC, currently only 2 remain to be done. The many storms and high winds over the past year has resulted in an increased number of fallen trees blocking paths, 14 in total. Small trees and dead branches I can deal with myself but sadly some enormous specimens have come down. Thanks to our cooperative



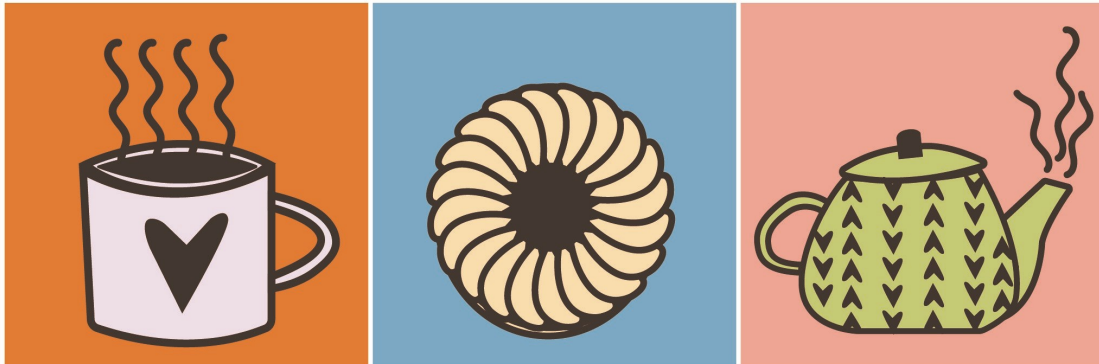
farmers and landowners no path has remained blocked for more than a few days. There have been 5 bridge problems, all relatively minor repairs. A couple of bridges are due to be completely replaced this year on the ECC maintenance schedule. An unusual problem occurred on FP36 where it runs very close to the stream, only 30m from The Street. The bank, including the footpath, has twice subsided into the stream. The farmer has cleared the stream of mud and removed the unstable portion of the bank. A more permanent solution will be found when the weather improves.



Whilst walking the local paths I also carry out the job of Tree Officer. This is to satisfy the Parish Council's responsibility to check on the safety of trees bordering the Public Rights-of-Way on WW Common, also the trees surrounding Bell Meadow. Nothing major has been spotted on our inspections over the past year.

Please help me to keep our paths safe and in good order. If you see anything that needs attention, or any improvements that you could suggest, please let me know. Also, whilst out walking, please carry a pair of secateurs in your pocket and help keep the brambles at bay! Lastly, let's hope that we have yet another good summer to enjoy our lovely WW countryside!

Peter Warren 01245 221326



WALTER'S

THIRD THURSDAY CAFE

**18th April, 16th May, 20th June
and every third Thursday.**

▼ 10am-12pm

Free Tea, Coffee and Biscuits



Community Hub with advice and information; Health & Wellbeing, Crime and Fraud Prevention, Digital Help, Home Safety and lots more



Arranged by Woodham Walter Parish Council with funding from Maldon District Council Community Hub Grant Scheme



- ▼ Get to know your neighbours
- ▼ Bringing generations together
- ▼ Warm welcome to those who are new to the village
- ▼ Just for a cuppa and a chat
- ▼ Meet old friends and new
- ▼ Working from home? Take a screen break!

Woodham Walter Village Hall, Rectory Road, Woodham Walter CM9 6RE

Walter’s Third Thursday Café—Jacky Bannerman



The Parish Council had long felt that an opportunity to provide a social meeting hub for village residents would be beneficial.

Walter’s Third Thursday Café began in April last year, so the 18th April 2024 will be our 1st Anniversary. We are delighted to welcome several regulars and ad-hoc visitors who attend from time to time. Everyone is welcome. Some come for a quick cuppa, some for the whole morning, we are happy to welcome you whenever and for however long you like!

Through the Winter we were also able to offer an additional Walter’s Soup & Social lunch which was well received by all who attended.

Walter’s could not run without the team of volunteers who help set out the Village Hall and serve teas and coffees. Thank you especially to Kim Gavan, Sally Bull, James & Anne Rushton and Graham Bannerman.

Part of the idea for Walter’s is to provide a Community Hub with advice and information on subjects such as Health & Wellbeing, Crime and Fraud prevention, Home Safety and lots more.

There is an information corner with leaflets and advice for guests to have a look through.

Walter’s is also a collection point for pink recycling bags and green food caddy liners.

Each month invited guests provide advice and information. This year we have been joined by Essex Fire & Rescue Service who were on hand to offer home safety advice and arranged to make house visits to give advice about smoke alarms. Also attending have been United in Kind and Maldon Community Voluntary Service (guests were happy to receive a free pair of

slippers), plus the Alzheimer Society, Essex Police and Citizens Advice.

Walter’s has also enabled guests to view the Village Archive and provided a Minerals Information Drop In session.

We are pleased to report that the Parish Council has agreed to continue funding Walter’s Café for another year. We had some excess funds to carry over from the grant we received from the Maldon District Council Community Hub Grant Scheme. We are also very grateful to have received support from Tesco who often supply biscuits, tea & coffee to help to keep our costs to a minimum.

Why not give Walter’s Third Thursday Café a try?

Next dates: 18th April, 16th May, 20th June and every Third Thursday from 10-12 in Woodham Walter Village Hall, Rectory Road.

We look forward to welcoming you!



Parish Clerk's Report — Jacky Bannerman



For the past 17 years, I've served as the Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer of Woodham Walter Parish Council. I work with councillors to make sure the council provides

the services you need. I'm tasked with carrying out statutory duties, provide support and advice to council members and ensure the decisions of the Parish Council are carried out. Clerks are professionals and serve around 10,000 local councils in England and Wales. These councils emerged in 1894 to give a democratic voice to local people and they've changed enormously in that time, particularly during the last 10-20 years. This council year (April 23-Mar 24) has been notably busy.

Our responsibilities encompass the maintenance of various village assets such as Bell Meadow, grass verges, hedges, street lighting, and overall village upkeep. Additionally, we actively participate in the planning consultation process.

Last year I reported on the task of claiming the Memorial Garden land for the Parish. We are now pleased to say that County Broadband have paid a £400 wayleave for their infrastructure on this land.

Community funding is allocated to support organisations like the Women's Club and Village Hall Association. We are the custodians of Woodham Walter Common and contribute to the Essex Wildlife Trust towards their work managing the Common on our behalf.

To empower local initiatives, we operate a Grants program, inviting applications for projects benefiting the village and its residents. Details and criteria for applying are available on our website.

Other expenditure last year included the Community Engagement Team

who are contracted for 5 hours per month (this includes TruCAM speed detecting and parking enforcement). The CET inspect the playground facility for us each week and provide a more detailed monthly inspection.

We plan to replace the goals soon and are currently awaiting a response to an application for funding which will be used to reduce the costs to the parish. We were fortunate to receive some funding from the Bell Meadow Village Association.



Walter's Third Thursday Café began in April last year so we are just coming up to our First Anniversary. We received funding from the Maldon District Council Community Hub Grant scheme and have carried over some excess funds to this year. We meet at the Village Hall and offer free refreshments, advice and information in a social setting. Each month we have different guests—please come along and see what it's all about. If nothing else you can collect pink recycling or green food caddy bags!

Last year we began a long term programme of replacing the street lighting to LED lights ensuring energy efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

A significant portion of my time is devoted to planning and enforcement matters, including consultations and responses to major topics. The Parish Council notifies applications via the village email system and all planning applications are put on our website with links to the planning documents and any response made by the Parish Council. I do always receive support of councillors and especially give thanks to Cllr. John

Tompkins for the huge amount of time he dedicates to this.

This year's biggest topics were :

- Screening Opinion Environmental Impact Statement for the Solar Farm. MDC decided against the Parish Council view that an EIA was required. We now await the application from Lightsource BP. The response involved much research as I'm sure the application will do too. We will of course consult the village prior to making a decision on our response.

- Application for dwelling houses along Top Road, this application was refused, but the impact for us was an additional Public Meeting (attended by over 100 people) plus all the research that goes into the Parish Council response which recommended refusal.

- Minerals Local Plan Review - again a public meeting (with 100+ people), plus research and analysis of information to make our response. We also made efforts to ensure that parishioners are informed and assisted in their own responses, including the printing and distribution of a flyer and information leaflet. I have printed over 100 paper consultation forms which have been distributed to various residents and visitors. We also liaised closely with the campaign group and ensured that residents had an opportunity to see information at Walter's Café. Members of the Parish Council attended the campaign group events at The Cats (although Ploughmen's lunch and beer did help with this!) and we visited Wood Corner to engage with residents there.



Parish Clerk’s Report –Jacky Bannerman

Our website continues to be regularly updated with lots of information about the work of the Parish Council, current planning applications, as well as Useful Links, a Noticeboard and other local information.

I send out a village email from time to time with information relevant to villagers—such as any major planning applications, road closures, changes to bin and recycling collections and Parish Council meeting reports along with District, County and other useful information. This has been particularly useful with information regarding the Minerals Local Plan consultation. There are currently 212 subscribers but with over 260 properties in the village there are many people who are missing out! Scan the QR code or visit our website to sign up.



Efforts extend to addressing local infrastructure issues, such as drainage and road maintenance, through collaboration with county and district authorities.

My regular walks around the village are rarely without clearing drains of leaves and taking photos of pot holes, flooding etc.



Highways reports take up a surprising amount of time and are not without frustration. Many is the time that a report “does not meet the criteria and will be monitored” when we think it should be dealt with promptly. We are able to access support from our County Councillor which I have done on several occasions. Open cases include the blocked drains on Church Hill. You can also

report issues directly on the website www.essexhighways.org/tell-us/report-all-issues.aspx

One of the biggest Highways issues of the last couple of years has been Hoe Mill Bridge. We continue to liaise with Highways, County Councillor Jane Fleming and our District Councillor ‘s regarding future works to replace the bridge and understand a number of schemes are being investigated. But there have been no updates over the last year.

Sadly I am all too frequently notified of fly tips in the parish. I report these to Maldon District Council who generally attend promptly. There were a series of fly tips on



Little Baddow Road which resulted in the CET fixing a sign and this seems to have resolved the issue with no further incidents in this location. You can report fly tipping directly to MDC by filling in the on-line form on their website www.maldon.gov.uk

The Playground has now been in place for a couple of years and has weathered well. My role now includes monitoring and ensuring that the playground remains safe and serviceable. This year we were disappointed that an incident of graffiti occurred, this was cleared and fortunately not been repeated. We are aware that one of the attachments for the rope on the trail has broken and



are awaiting the parts to make the repair. Please report any issues to us.

We have begun working with some new financial software this year and I have attended numerous virtual training sessions to get up to speed. Scribe is a sector specific accounting system and helps us to keep a detailed view of our accounts. Scribe provide all sorts of training and I have found it to be very beneficial.



This year saw the Parish Council receive a large quantity of village archive information. We have been sharing it around those who are interested (so far 8 people have had the boxes), and we had a display at Walter’s Café a couple of times. If you are interested to see it please let me know. Here is one of the old village photographs from the collection—sheep on Bell Meadow—not within the remit of the Parish Clerk surely?!



I am grateful for the supportive network of dedicated councillors and the community's recognition of the evolving role of the Parish Clerk. Woodham Walter is lucky to have a full team of supportive and dedicated councillors and I thank them all for their valued time and judgement.

Find out more about Woodham Walter Parish Council from its website:

www.woodhamwalter-pc.gov.uk

Village Design Statement — Cllr. John Tompkins



Woodham Walter Parish Council

The
Woodham Walter
Village Design
Statement
2017

The Village Design Statement (VDS) has been in use since approved by the Maldon District Council (MDC) in 2017 and continues to be an extremely useful tool for both the Parish Council and for the MDC when consulting on or determining planning applications. Although a guide, it is nevertheless an important supplementary planning document carrying some weight and forming an integral part of the local planning authority assessment. In consequence residents wishing to make a planning application should carefully consider it with their consultants before making their planning submission.

In the opinion of some, planning legislation is currently in a state of flux with so much of it undergoing consultation and change that it is difficult to keep up with. There are further consultations to follow including on climate change adaptation and flood-risk management, provision of social homes and electric vehicle charging points. This creates a level of uncertainty and is perhaps reflected in some of the more recent planning decisions made. In view of this background the Parish Council decided to review the existing VDS document. The review will take into consideration the governmental changes, including national and local design codes when they are known, as well as accommodating the expe-

rience that has been gained in assessing planning applications against the VDS and reinforcing areas where necessary.

This report last year reflected upon the anticipated changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This Framework, revised on 19th December 2023, replaces the previous National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012, revised in July 2018, updated in February 2019, revised in July 2021 and updated in September 2023! Where plans reach pre-submission consultation after 19 March 2024, the policies in the new NPPF will apply. Plans that reach pre-submission consultation on or before this date will be examined under the previous version of the NPPF.

Critically, the NPPF appears to have considered the manner in which the 5-year housing land supply is calculated and in consequence MDC now believe that it has in excess of the government requirement. This affects the village for, although there is a defined settlement area (DSA) that is supposed to safeguard from rapacious and exploitative speculative development, unless the housing land supply can be maintained across the Maldon District at the necessary levels, the rules pertaining to DSAs are put in obedience. This was one of the significant factors in the refusal of the Top Road proposals by the planners. It is to be hoped the changes could give more protection from creeping, banal urbanity for rural villages such as

Woodham Walter as defined in the VDS.

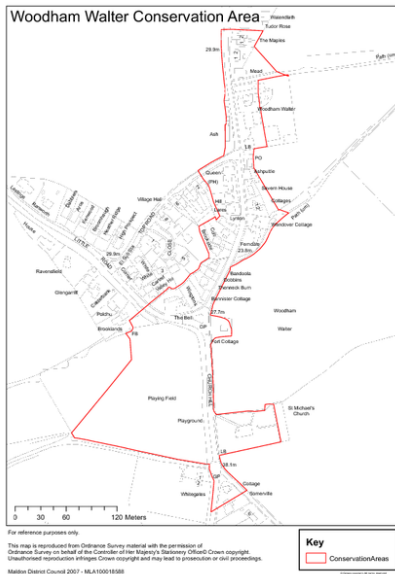
Notwithstanding the base level changes, the basics of the VDS remain extant and it is urged that these be considered by residents if, or when they are considering a planning application or building under Permitted Development (PD) rules. Elements such as fenestration, materials and roofs, combined with good design are really important elements when considering the local setting and environment. Most PD such as Change of Use Prior Approval applications (COUPA) give little opportunity to comment or object but it is hoped that applicants will adhere to the VDS principles. The regulations regarding the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings remain unaltered and there is now a supplementary Local List of buildings of historic or architectural interest that will be fully integrated with the VDS in due course.

The VDS group of three had started a significant survey of the design character and setting of every property in the Village but this has been delayed by the potential national changes outlined above, the Warren Lodges Appeal, the Top Road proposals, currently the Local Minerals Plan Review and preparation for a potential solar farm application all of which require a very significant amount of background work.

It is hoped to be able to recommence in the near future to be ready to incorporate the survey findings in an updated, supplementary VDS document within the new parameters which of course may change if the political background changes following a general election.

Cllr. John Tompkins Dip. Arch. (Hons), RIBA (Rtd).

Woodham Walter Conservation Area



Woodham Walter has a designated Conservation Area and Article 4 Direction. This is in the central village area. You can view more information on the MDC or Woodham Walter websites.

Establishing a conservation area immediately places firmer planning controls over certain types of development. The main additional requirements include the following:

- 6 weeks’ notice must be given to the local authority before works are carried out to any tree in the area. This does not include trees whose trunks have a diameter of less than 75mm above ground level
- Planning permission is required for the demolition of any unlisted building with a volume of more than 115 cubic metres
- Planning permission is required to demolish a gate, fence, wall or railing over 1 metre high next to a highway (including a public footpath or bridleway) or public open space; or over 2 metres high elsewhere
- Planning permission is required for alterations to the roof of a dwelling house resulting in a mate-

rial alteration to its shape, notably dormer windows

- Planning permission is needed for the installation of a satellite dish on a chimney, wall or roof slope which faces onto and is visible from a public highway
- Planning permission is needed to clad any part of the exterior of a dwelling house with stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles.



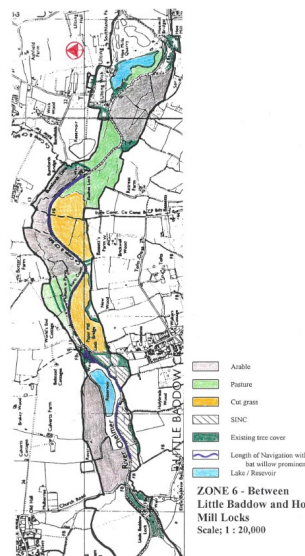
Chelmer & Blackwater Conservation Area



The other Conservation Area within our Parish is the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation Conservation Area. This forms a central element of the lower Chelmer Valley which is described as a major landscape feature. Woodham Walter is within Zone 6: Little Baddow to Hoe Mill Lock and Zone 7: Hoe Mill Lock to Langford Pumping Station.

The character of Zone 6 is described as quiet, rural remote from development and has the most valuable landscape of the Conservation Area.

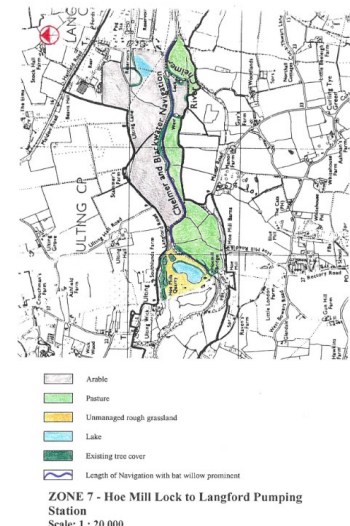
Zone 7 is described as having more pasture and more mixed native vegetation along the water-body banks. Enlarged arable fields are prominent on the north bank and can give an impression of a flat open landscape.



The document explains that conservation of existing qualities is a major requirement particularly in rural zones 6 and 7.

To read more of the document visit the website.

www.woodhamwalter-pc.gov.uk





MALDON DISTRICT COUNCIL

District Councillor Simon Morgan



L-R District Councillor Simon Morgan and Mark Durham

The last year has been both interesting and frustrating. In May we had the Municipal elections where both Councillor Mark

Durham and I were both delighted and humbled at being returned with such significant majorities. You voters have bestowed a great privilege upon us and I can assure you all that we are both fully aware of the trust and responsibility that you have charged us with and we are determined to repay your endorsement of us by doing the very best we can to represent your interests and aspirations within the Council. The election results left no organised political group within the Council with an overall majority. Instead, those representing themselves as Independents now hold thirteen seats which made them the largest group and clearly demonstrated that the District residents had no clear confidence in the established parties. However, somewhat surprisingly, the Independents did not seek to exploit their dominant position but instead decided to form two separate factions. One, led by Councillor Richard Siddall, actually registered themselves as a political party, the Maldon Independent Group, which one might regard as a contradiction in terms. So, the Council, was in a 'no overall control' situation. This meant a somewhat protracted period of horse trading before an agreement was reached by which one of the independent groups, the Maldon Independent Group led by Councillor Richard Siddall, was voted into office with Cllr. Siddall as Leader of the Council. The other three Groups, the Conservatives, the Liberal Democrats and the somewhat strangely titled Maldon Support Group became a tri-partite opposition.

Together all four Groups recognized the situation and with advice from the Local Government Association agreed to facilitate a method of consensual working to ensure the District had a viable administration. The success of this agreement was well demonstrated with the passing of next year's budget by thirty votes to one.

This was a triumph of pragmatism over politics which is, ultimately, what is required. Local government should not be driven by political dogma but by the need to properly represent and advance the requirements of the District and, the election over, all parties agreed to put their rosettes away for the next four years and do their best to provide a working and effective Council.

The budget was a clear and early example of the system's success. Under the experienced Chairmanship of the Financial Working Group by Councillor Mark Durham all parties were able to agree and then pass the budget.

Besides finance the other major issue we had to confront was planning and further development. In particular, the revision of the Local Development Plan (LDP). A particular issue was the fact that we started May 2023 without a Five Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS).

The Council had not, had a 5YHLS for some time which meant that the District was very vulnerable to speculative applications from developers. Without a valid 5YHLS what was termed as the tilted balance would prevail implying an obligation to approve applications so that the statutorily required housing needs would be provided unless they violated important obligations in the LDP.

In May the Planning Policy Working Group reviewed the methodology that had been used to establish the 5YHLS and realised that the current system of calculation was flawed. Legal opinion was sought as to proposed improvements to that methodology which were approved and, as a result, the 5YHLS went from 3.5 years to a figure of 6.3 years, which means that we are now able to confi-

dently refuse speculative development applications.

However, the future of development in the District continues to be of concern. Councillor Durham and I would urge all residents prior to the upcoming general election, to look very carefully at the proposed planning proposals contained in all the major parties' manifestos and decide which most aligns with their views as to how matters should go forward. In terms of the new LDP it has now been proposed that the North Western Area of the District should be seen as an Arcadian landscape and therefore not suitable for major developments. However, dependent upon the outcome of the general election that might change.

Other issues that have subsequently emerged are the future of Saint Peters' Hospital in Maldon. The NHS have already moved the 'In bed' Stroke and Maternity facilities out of the District to Brentwood and Braintree respectively. Woodham Walter is probably less impacted but one can only wonder how someone in Bradwell who suffers a stroke or a significantly difficult birthing issue is going to be able to get themselves to either Brentwood or Braintree using an effectively nonexistent public transport system.

We also have the statutory review of Essex County Council's Minerals allocation policy. This potentially has significant impacts on Woodham Walter and other parts of our Ward. Many of you will already have been contacted by the Parish Council urging you to reply to the Consultation on both matters. We also encourage you to make a submission.

Looking forward, significant challenges lie ahead. However, Maldon District Council has avoided the plight faced by many other Authorities who have had to issue Section 114 notices. This is in no small way because your Ward members have fought against additional expenditure that would threaten the solvency of the Council and we both look to continue to do our best to provide the best and most prudent municipal governance in the future.



RideLondon Event 24th—26th May

Event overview

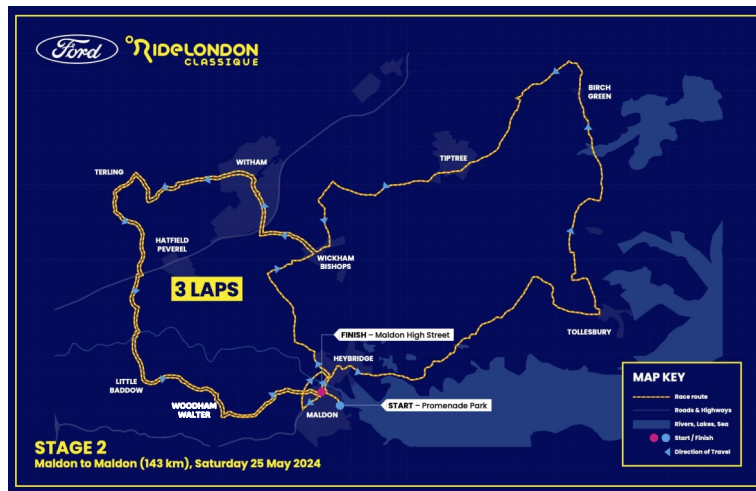
RideLondon is a festival of cycling established by the Mayor of London in 2013 as an Olympic legacy event. The event returns in 2024 along similar routes to last year across 3 days including parts of Essex and London.

On Saturday 25th May the UCI Women’s World tour will come through Woodham Walter.

Road closures will be in place in in Woodham Walter between 12:00-2:30pm (TBC) with the race expected to come through the village at speed. Details of the route indicates that it comes through the village (x 3 laps) via: Little Baddow Road, Church Hill, Oak Farm Road, Old London Road.

Parking restrictions: If you usually park on a road that will be closed for the event, please move your vehicle the night before. Vehicles cannot be parked on the event route from 05:00 on Saturday 25 May until the roads reopen. Any vehicle left on the route or parked in a suspended parking bay will be relocated.

Once again this year it takes place on the Saturday and there will be some disruption to residents and businesses so please plan ahead.



Maldon will welcome the race for Stage Two on Saturday 25 May, following successful stages in the last two years. The historic market town hosted a thrilling stage in 2023 when American Chloé Dygert (Canyon//SRAM Racing) took the first European road race victory of her career. The race will begin at 11am from Promenade Park

It is actually great fun to see the race come through the village and lots of spectators took the opportunity to come out last year.

Plan ahead for the 2024 RideLondon weekend Friday 24 May to Sunday 26 May 2024. As a result, **extensive road closures** will be required in some areas during this period.

This includes the RideLondon charity rides on Sunday 26th May. Routes affected: Chelmsford/Epping and into London. Check before you travel around Essex/London this weekend. www.ridelondon.co.uk/

Ride London Classique

Featuring the world's greatest teams and riders, the Classique has been part of RideLondon since its first edition in 2013 and was added to the UCI Women's WorldTour calendar in 2016. Previously a one-day race in London, the event is now a three-day stage race involving two stunning stages in Essex and a final stage in the heart of the capital.

Stage One will begin in the medieval market town of Saffron Walden, in north-west Essex, and finish in the historic city of Colchester. Maldon will welcome the race for Stage Two on Saturday 25 May, following successful stages in the last two years, before the showpiece Stage Three in central London.



Woodham Walter Women's Club—Joanna Symons



The period from April 2023 to March 2024 has been a varied and interesting one for the Club. Up until the AGM in September 2023 the Club had been run for several years by a Committee without an overall President. However from September 2023, two of the members, Sue Willsmer and Joanna Symons, agreed to become Joint Presidents. They are looking forward to being part of this next chapter in the Club's long history, and hope to continue in the footsteps of all the past excellent Presidents, while introducing a few new ideas along the way.

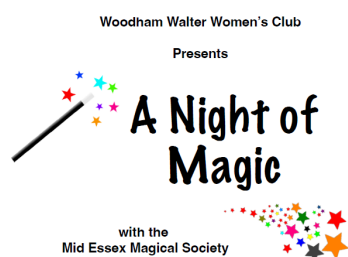
Gill Brearley once again came up with a great programme of events for the year. There were some very interesting and unusual talks including a Beatrix Potter themed talk, Rev Julie talked about her pathway to the ministry, and there was a talk on Antarctic Exploration.

There were two very well attended early winter and summer lunches in the Bell, a Belly Dancing Demonstration with plenty of audience participation, and the annual Fish and Chip supper in October with Sue Willsmer bringing in the food from her local fish and chip shop in Maldon. Kim Gavan organized a lovely afternoon visit to the beautiful garden

at Ulting Wick in August to celebrate the Club's Founder's Day, and we were lucky with the weather. After a leisurely stroll around the beautiful gardens, we enjoyed tea and cakes in one of the covered barns.



Our fundraiser event in November was 'An Evening of Magic' performed by the Mid Essex Magical Society. It was held in the Village Hall, and over 80 people attended. A lovely selection of savoury and sweet platters was prepared by members, and served halfway through the evening. The Mid Essex Magical Society did not disappoint, and their table and stage magic show was slick and professional, as well as being pretty amazing and clever. The Club were very pleased to raise a good sum of money for their funds through ticket sales and the raffle.



Meanwhile Jo and Sue, the new Joint Presidents have been busy working their way through the fascinating archives of this unique Club, which date from 1906 to the present day. They found this really fascinating, although a rather large task! Some of the oldest papers will be held at the Essex Record Office as they provide a real insight into the workings of a small rural Essex village at the beginning and throughout the 20th Century.

Sue and Jo are also in the process of putting together a new Constitution for the Club (with pro bono legal help), which will better reflect the Club as it is today

The Women's Club continues to thrive to this day, and has a strong membership and continues to attract new members. We meet on the fourth Tuesday of the month in the Club room in Top Road, and details of the meetings appear in the Parish News each month.



We are very keen to continue to recruit new members from the village and local community to keep the Club thriving into the 21st Century, so if you are interested or even a bit curious, please come along and we can guarantee you a very warm welcome.

Joanna Symons (Joint President)

Woodham Walter Village Hall Association - Merryl Cox



I am pleased to report that the village hall has had a very successful year. The recent years of reinvestment and refurbishment have paid off and we have had one of our most financially successful years ever. Hirings are higher than previously experienced, and we are excited about the part the hall will play in our community over the coming years.

Our fixed rate electricity tariff recently ended and we have found another supplier at a competitive rate, but it is still an increase that has to be covered. Hopefully, the increased costs will be covered by the increase in revenue.

We recently returned to holding fundraising events, something we haven't been able to do since before the pandemic. In March, we hosted a band called 'Shades of Simon', a Simon and Garfunkel tribute act which was very well received. By the end of the evening many people were dancing and a good evening was had by all. We are grateful to our local

community and appreciate their support. I would also like to thank our committee for organising such a successful event.

We are interested in hosting similar events in the future, as this is not only a good way to raise funds for the hall, but also enables the community to have fun. If you have any suggestions, please contact us.

Our village hall is a valuable asset to Woodham Walter and the surrounding areas. We are reliant on the local community to help keep this village amenity available. I would like to express my appreciation to all residents and to the Parish Council for their support. The Parish Council are currently using the village meeting hall to host their lunch club and

the Walter's Café. These events are vital to residents and add greatly to our close community, helping to enrich and support everyone.

I would also like to thank the village hall committee. Because of their input, the village has a great place to meet, socialise, exercise, learn and celebrate.

Bookings and inquires can be made through our bookings clerk; Andrew Ritchings on: 07745 888173 or email: caretaker_wwwvh@btinternet.com

If anyone is interested in joining our team, please contact either myself or Sarah Maxted to find out more information. We meet 4/5 times a year in a relaxed meeting, where you can contribute as much or as little as you are comfortable with.

We look forward to welcoming you soon.

Merryl Cox (Chairman)



Woodham Walter Allotment Association - Jane Weedon



Again the change in climate made it too warm for some brassica growing while those plants that put in late have continued to prosper over the winter giving produce to families until now.

Thanks to Peter and Bryony Maynard we are entering our fifteenth year of the Woodham Walter Allotment Association which is a credit to the community and the happy allotment holders who enjoy coming out into the fresh air and pottering about growing some organic fruit and vegetables whilst getting their hands dirty which is so good for body and mind.

We have had one newcomer who is looking after an abandoned part of a patch. Due to the generosity of one couple we have been able to continue giving an Ukrainian couple an allotment to tend.

The hot parts of the summer last year gave us some relief from mowing but now the grass has been growing so fast with all the rain we are slowly catching up to make it tidy and presentable again between the plots.

Some allotment holders were successful with their carrots, fruit and potatoes but the early hot weather caught some broad bean growers out with lots of black fly spoiling the crop.

Thanks to Bryony we kept the weeds down around the allotment fence and with the new fence we kept the rabbits out but we still needed to protect the brassicas from the pigeons with many allotment holders building cages.

Many thanks again the Chris Wheadon for his monthly gardening tips. There was an increased variety of crops with flowers, celery, pumpkins and artichokes and outdoor tomatoes all doing well and a pleasure to see thriving.

Walkers passing by and the Maynards practicing their golf

swings can enjoy seeing this village community project in action so much so some are eager to join our waiting list.



To be eligible for a plot, you must be a Parishioner of Woodham Walter, be an Educational establishment within the Parish or have a direct connection to the village.

janeanneweedon@gmail.com

01245 226469





FLOWER FESTIVAL



ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH
WOODHAM WALTER



“THE JOY OF FLOWERS”



FRIDAY JULY 12TH – MONDAY 15TH JULY 2024
10AM – 5PM

Refreshment tent 🌸 *Free Admission* 🌸 *Live music*

SUNDAY SERVICE 10- 11



Woodham Walter Parish Councillors

James Rushton (Chairman)



I am Essex born and bred, born in Loughton, growing up in Frinton, and going to school in Colchester. Anne and I moved to Woodham Walter in 2004 with our two daughters, Elizabeth and Charlotte, both of whom have now moved away from home. Our principal reasons for moving here were greater quality of life and to be nearer to family, both Anne's and mine.

My career was in music publishing, all genres of music but especially classical. I retired at the end of 2020. Music remains extremely important to me – although my piano playing isn't quite what it used to be! I do my best when called upon to play the organ at St Michael's. Alongside that I am a passionate cricket follower, and since moving here I have found myself becoming more and more interested in the natural environment. I am currently volunteering for the Essex Wildlife Trust.

The community of Woodham Walter has given a lot to us as a family and I am concerned as a Councillor to help to ensure that the sense of togetherness in the village as a whole and its unique and special characteristics are retained.

John Brown (Vice-Chairman)



My wife, Shelley, and I grew up in Rayleigh but with the dream of one day finding somewhere to keep our own horses. After an extended period looking, we were lucky to find such a place in Woodham Walter, where we moved to in 2004. Having some horses was always the plan, but ending up with three is more by chance than design. We've always had cats and, as I am sure many who are servants to their felines will acknowledge, are all too easy to accumulate. For my career I am the global Head of Information Systems for an investment company based in London. It was IT and specifically broadband that led to me becoming a Parish

Councillor. Woodham Walter is such a peaceful and friendly place; it is where I want to be most of the time. My interests can be summarised by saying, tinkering on various projects in my shed. Recently I have outgrown the old timber hut I had been using and this has led to an expansion of the hobby room and a consequential improvement programme for our outside space. As many of you will know, Shelley is a passionate gardener, and we open our garden several times a year for the National Garden Scheme charity raising money for various nursing concerns. My preferred activities include going out on my mountain bike and roller skating. Which of those takes priority tends to vary over time.

James Bunn



I have lived in Woodham Walter for most of my life now, having lived in Danbury from age 1-6, then Woodham Walter there after except for periods working away all over the country. I spent my childhood playing in the Wilderness and cycling round the lanes of the village. I went to school in Danbury, then in Ingatestone before working for several years for an Electrical Engineering company before going to University to get a degree in Engineering. I bought my own house in the village 20 years ago, and have loved the village since I was a child.

I became a Parish Councillor at the time that Bell Meadow was being disposed of by the water company as I wanted to ensure that the asset was not lost to the village. I have always felt that being a Councillor is a small way for me to do some good for the place I grew up in, and intend to continue living in.

Jenny Hughes



I have been a parish councillor for six years and joined as I felt that I could add a valuable perspective to the council. I have lived in Woodham Walter all my life my parents still live in the village and I'm lucky enough to live here with my husband and two young girls. I am passionate about the countryside and our farming heritage and the preservation of this in the modern world.

Woodham Walter Parish Councillors

Joanna Symons



With the exception of the three years that I lived in Warwickshire while at University, I have lived and worked in Essex for most of my life.

My late husband and I moved to Woodham Walter nearly 30 years ago, attracted by its peace and tranquility, the lovely views of rolling countryside, the open skies and the beautiful woodland walks. My working life was spent mainly at the University of Essex, where I was Head of the Careers Dept, and so when I had the opportunity to take early retirement, I was keen to devote some of my spare time to community activities, which was something that I had never had the time to do when working. Thus I joined the Parish Council in the hope that I could, in some very small way, help to preserve the character and history of the village for future generations, and provide advice and help on any local issues as necessary to parishioners.

John Tompkins



By profession I am a Chartered Architect now retired from a lifetime career as a principal in private practice. I was also appointed a General Commissioner of Income Tax in 1986 serving 22 years and becoming Deputy Chairman of the Havering Division. As part of my practice, I was privileged to serve as Clerk of the Worshipful Company of Bakers until retirement in 2012. My wife and I moved to the Village in 1977 and have a married son and daughter with five granddaughters. We enjoy being involved with village life and are active in St Michael's as well as socially. The environment has always been my focus and in consequence

I became involved with the Parish Council by way of the Village Design Statement where, as a volunteer, I was able to use my knowledge and experience of design, planning, building and the environment together with graphic design skills to best advantage. I now strive through the Parish Council to endeavour to retain the happy, friendly and pleasant Arcadian environment in which we are all privileged to live.

Peter Warren



Both born and bred in Essex, keen on walking and the countryside in general, my wife Tina and I have always enjoyed visiting this area. So, on my retirement after 43 years in the pharmaceutical industry, we couldn't wait to move from Rayleigh to the tranquility of Woodham Walter and 19 years later have never regretted it. Living not far away, our 3 children and 5 grandchildren are frequent visitors.

I really value the strong community spirit in the Village and joined the Parish Council 17 years ago to help protect the unique character and charm of this area. My main role is that of Footpath Officer and I really enjoy wandering around the Parish paths making sure that there aren't any problems. Besides walking and the countryside my interests include tending my vegetable plot, sea fishing, playing snooker badly, going horse racing and sampling the occasional pint of real ale.

Jacky Bannerman (Parish Clerk)



I was born in West Sussex where I lived until I married Graham and moved to Essex 31 years ago. We have two children, our daughter now lives in London our son is in Year 11 at The Plume in Maldon. We moved to Woodham Walter in 2002 (so still newcomers!) and I took on the role of Parish Clerk in 2006, the job working from home continues to fit in well with my life. I also work with Graham for our business TV, audio and events company which we run from home. I enjoy taking on other community roles such as organising the Walter's Third Thursday Café. We like walking and you will often see us out around Woodham Walter which we love. We also enjoy kayaking and stand-up paddleboarding on the canal.

St Michael's Church - Michael Bradbrook & James Rushton



We started 2024 with our annual meeting and Michael Bradbrook and James Rushton were duly re-elected as a churchwardens. Having two churchwardens During 2023/4 has greatly assisted the smooth running of St.Michael's. Paul Clark has continued to provide valuable assistance and support for which we are most grateful. Services were back to normal in late 2022 and throughout 2023 and the church was again open on a daily basis. It is perhaps worth remembering that it is open for you if ever you want a quiet moment of reflection.

We are extremely fortunate that Rev'd Julie is our Priest-in-Charge (including St.Margaret's, Woodham Mortimer and All Saints, Purleigh) who leads our services of Holy Communion and the many other services held from time to time. We are also grateful for the support and assistance from Alan Marjoram and Scott Gailer and our 'Home Team' of Kathy and Geoff in leading Morning Prayer and Family

Services. As always, we are indebted to Ken Hay, our organist, and also to Martin Cook and James Rushton who step in when needed.

Throughout the year we have continued our links with Woodham Walter (C of E) Primary School with church members and Rev'd Julie serving as governors whilst continuing 'Open the Book' and Rev'd Julie leading collective worship assemblies from time to time. The school leavers service at St.Michael's in July each year is always a special occasion. We continue to take great pleasure in spending time with the children and staff of Tadpoles Nursery including their visits to the church. During 2023 there was one baptism, one funeral, one burial, two burial of ashes, one memorial service and one wedding service.

The Flower Festival was held from 14th July to 17th July the theme being 'Anything Goes' and was spectacular. It always draws visitors from far and



wide. We were also able to enjoy 'Fizz and Flowers' which as always was a great success. We are indebted as always to our wonderful flower arrangers and of course to all those who helped run the event including those who provided refreshments and to all those who kindly sponsored the festival. The festival raises much needed funds to help maintain the fabric of the church.

In October, we held a 'Thank You' evening in church which was a very relaxed and informal evening where all those who help with the church could chat and we were able to express our gratitude for all that they do. The Remembering Service in November draws people together who have sadly lost loved ones and we hope that we were able to provide some comfort to all those who mourn.

The work never stops to maintain and improve St.Michael's. With some very kind donations and existing funds, we were able to complete the repairs to the brickwork on the west gable wall in 2022 and it was hoped we would be able in 2023 to complete the brickwork repairs to the east wall and baptistry wall. However, due to circumstances beyond our control these works were delayed, and it is now anticipated that the works will commence in April 2024. We are indebted to John Tompkins who oversees and monitors the works.

St Michael's Church



During 2023 we completed the refurbishment and general repair of the Almshouses and a new resident was found for the vacant Almshouse. After many, many years as Honorary Clerk, Angus Neale stepped down from the role and we would like to express our gratitude for all his years of service and dedication in caring for the Almshouses. We are delighted that Neil Bell, who lives in the village, has now been appointed as Honorary Clerk.



The memorial clock at St. Michael's required some repairs in late 2023 to the winder which have now been completed and the clock is now back in full working order. We are most grateful to David Weedon and Brian Cumming for their continuing contri-



but ion in maintaining and dealing with any repairs which may be required for the clock.

We are always most grateful to the Friends of St. Michael's who help maintain the church and care for the now extended churchyard and in particular Colin Warner who ensures that the grass is cut, hedges are trimmed, and trees managed - all on a voluntary basis. We are also indebted to Gill Orford as chair of the Friends who has organised the work parties and is always there to lend a hand.

The work to maintain St. Michael's is never ending. As previously reported but nevertheless appropriate to reemphasise again, we were so fortunate to have been donated a parcel of land to the southern boundary of our churchyard which is now incorporated with the existing churchyard. One only has to look at the number of burials which have now taken place in the churchyard extension to realise that without it we would have been in the invidious position of having to decline further burials. We are now in the fortunate position to be able to serve the needs of the local and wider community now and for future generations.

As 2023 came to a close, we were again able to hold midnight mass. A nativity tableaux inside the church gate was again kindly organised by James and Anne Rushton for which we are most grateful.

We must express our sincere thanks to Reverend Julie for her dedication and commitment to us and the wider community which knows no bounds. We are most fortunate that she is our Priest-in-Charge.

A big thank you as always to



our PCC team who have worked tirelessly and to everyone that has extended a hand to make sure that St. Michael's runs smoothly. Your loyalty and dedication has been greatly appreciated.

Our ethos remains the same and as Christians we want to be known to represent God's love to all and to extend that love to our community every day. St. Michael's is always there for you unconditionally. You are assured of a warm welcome.



Essex County Councillor, Maldon Division—Jane Fleming



I'm delighted to present my third annual report for Woodham Walter Parish Council's Annual Parish Meeting. Firstly, I would like to thank the Parish Council for their tireless work in supporting residents and protecting the parish - Woodham Walter is a beautiful village with a distinct identity and sense of community.

Essex County Council announced in February of this year the review of the Local Minerals Plan. The Minerals Local Plan Review Consultation was launched on the 6th of February and will finish on the 9th of April. Hopefully, many of you will have taken the time to comment on both the draft Replacement Minerals Local Plan and the interim results of the site assessments that will guide the allocation of new mineral sites to support development in Essex to 2040.

Also launched in January of this year, was the Mid & South Essex Integrated Care Boards' Consultation on 'Proposed Changes to Services at Local Community Hospitals', which again hopefully many of you found the time to get involved with as the future of St Peter's Hospital and the future of medical services in the District were at its heart.

The RideLondon Womens World Tour came through the village in May last year and returns to the Maldon District again this year on Saturday 25th May. Woodham Walter is on the route and there will be three periods of temporary road closure between 11.30 and 15.30 hours. In September, I supported Maldon District Council's Saltmarsh Coast Walking Festival, a hugely successful week long event which will run again this year at the end of September. It was recently named in the top 10 Walking Festivals in the UK in The Guardian newspaper.

The 2023/24 financial year was a challenging year. Like many councils up and down the country, Essex County Council experienced pressure on both Adult's and Children's Ser-

vices and Home to School Transport. The care market continues to struggle with capacity, and there is still uncertainty around the timing and financial impact of potential care reform. The Council continues to operate in a climate of uncertainty and volatility - inflation has begun to reduce, although it is still above the Bank of England target rate, interest rates remain high and the Council continues to face a significant level of uncertainty in the medium term.

Essex County Council has a legal responsibility to operate within a balanced budget. With the changes and reductions in Government grant funding over recent years, coupled with increasing and more complex demand for core services such as caring for the elderly, protecting vulnerable children and supporting those families who need it, the financial situation continues to be challenging.

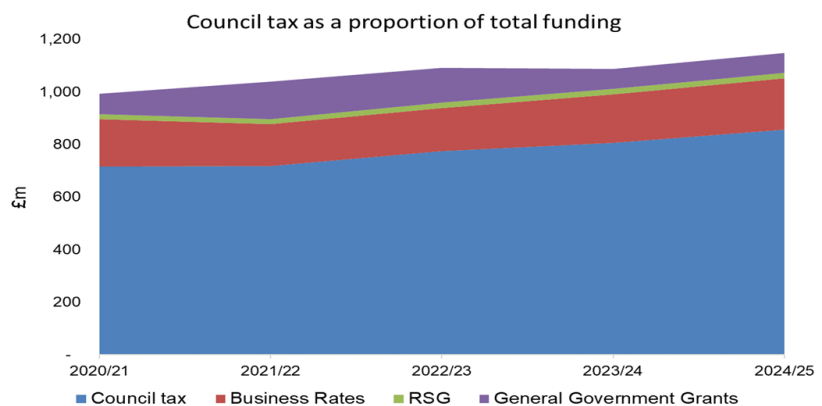
In February, Essex County Council agreed it's new Budget for 2024/25. The Council again had a stark choice in balancing its budget - of increasing taxes or facing unacceptable cuts in services. We balanced the budget against a backdrop of some of the most challenging times that local government has ever faced. New financial pressures caused by the need to support the recovery from Covid, the cost of living crisis, the war in Ukraine, the energy cost spike, and unprecedented inflation levels have all landed on top of existing challenges to reform and reshape our services and respond to huge increas-

es in demand from those who need our help most.

The Everyone's Essex Annual Plan and budget was approved at Full Council and the net cost of services was set at £1,148.0million (m) for 2024/25 and the net revenue budget requirement was set at £1,073.4m (net cost of services less general government grants) for 2024/25. The total council tax funding requirement was set at £848.3m for 2024/25 – Essex County Council's element of the council tax was increased by 4.99% comprising of a 2.99% increase in general council tax and 2.0% adult social care precept. This spending supports the most vulnerable in our communities including older people, people with learning difficulties, mental health difficulties and physical and sensory impairments. The precept is being used to insulate Adult Social Care from having to make higher savings, and support growth in need caused by changes in the demographics of our population and inflation, including the national living wage rise.

This resulted in the Essex County Council element of the council tax being £1,522.53 for a Band D property in 2024/25 - this is an increase of £1.39 per household per week.

Net expenditure of £1,148m is funded by council tax, business rates, Revenue Support Grant and General Government Grants. Income from Council Tax is the largest funding stream and will make up 75% of our funding in 2024/25.



Essex County Councillor—Jane Fleming



Also at Full Council, the Cabinet Member for Highways made the welcome announcement of an additional £12m for highways maintenance, £8m of which will go to fund additional highways crews to be tasked by their local councillor, an extra £2m to go to Local Highways Panels and also funding for extra enforcement resources. The details of the scheme for locally directed maintenance work will be announced shortly.

Investment is also being made in Essex for the long term: there has been a focus on levelling up to ensure that opportunity is spread to all parts of the county. Investment has been made in the construction of a new railway station at Beaulieu Park – the first publicly built new station on the Great Eastern Main Line for 100 years. In the last year, 125,000 trees have been planted in the county in the last year bringing the total since the start of this Council period to half a million. ECC has also expanded the provision of care-tech – enabling thousands of people to live more independent lives; and invested in innovation across our children’s services, building on ECC’s status as one of the best children’s services authorities in the country.

In September I was invited to view the construction and sign the steel of the new 420 place primary school being built at Limebrook Way, Maldon.



The ECC Locality Fund reopened for applications last May with £5k allocated per Division. Again, I’m pleased to say that every penny of the funding specifically allocated for the Maldon Division Locality Fund, was spent. Projects that benefitted this year were Wentworth School Council

for an Active Travel Scheme designed by Living Streets called The Walk to School Challenge, Beeleigh Mill Restoration Group to fund the renovation of the historic Elephant Boiler, Helping Hands a Carers Support Group to fund a day trip to Southwold this summer, Woodham Mortimer Litter Picking Group to fund litter picking equipment, and Purleigh Village Shop to fund the renovation of an outbuilding to use for community events. My thanks go to the councils and community groups who approached me with their projects and for the hard work put in.

The remaining Locality funding was directed to a new fund – the ‘Local Community Fund.’ The Local Community Fund operated as twelve separate funds, each covering the area of a district, borough or city council. The fund for each district was £4,000 for each county councillor representing the relevant area. The fund had to be spent on one of three areas: Levelling up, Tackling Climate Change, and Youth services.

We (the ECC Division Members for the Maldon District) decided to direct funding specifically to help our secondary schools to purchase educational and pastoral care resources and to projects to support young people in the District. The projects funded to go into our secondary schools were a production called ‘Shadows’ produced by N-Act, a ‘Do you Hear Me’ work shop produced by Tic Box Productions, and Resilience Voyage for the visit of the County lines “Drugs Bus”, a double decker bus designed to educate and to raise young people’s awareness of gangs, grooming, and knife crime to our schools.

For our secondary schools we also funded the purchase of Check Your Drink (CYD), easy to use drug detection strips to be made available to sixth form students. These strips test for both GHB and Ketamine, the two most widely used drink spiking drugs.

Outside of our secondary schools we provided funding to the MDCVS

Community Gaming Initiative project which runs activities for people, particularly younger people, to build social connections and other skills such as team working and problem solving.

We also funded two one day events at the Maldon and Burnham Skate Parks run by King Ramps. The events were aimed at 100-150 young people with demonstrations from some of the country’s top professional skateboarders and BMX riders. Competitions were held at the end of the events which were open for all abilities and judged by professionals. King Ramps provided prizes for the top 3 places in skateboard, scooter and BMX competitions. Workshops were also open to all ages and abilities for which full safety equipment (helmets knee, elbow and wrist pads) and skateboards and BMX bikes was provided.

The Locality Fund and the Local Community Fund open again for applications this May, so if you have a project or community initiative, please do contact me with your suggestions/applications at cllr.jane.fleming@essex.gov.uk

The Local Highways Panel work continued very slowly this year, with delivery of schemes once again impacted by resource issues at Essex Highways. Schemes that I have submitted in the village include footway clearance on The Street and a 20s Plenty Scheme for Rectory Road around the school. Local Highways Panels are due a reset at the end of this month in terms of what type of scheme will fall within their remit and an announcement is due shortly. I continue to argue for schemes within the Maldon Division and District to be a funding priority as speed reduction and highways safety are vital for those living and driving on rural roads.

Throughout the year, I have continued to support residents with their concerns and to assist parishes with their issues requiring escalation. If you have concerns about an issue in the Division, please email me: cllr.jane.fleming@essex.gov.uk

Woodham Walter Primary School—Philip Brown



The last year at Woodham Walter C of E Primary School has been a combination of challenge and success in equal measure.

Firstly the successes.

The school finished the last academic year with some strong results. 63% of pupils at Woodham Walter met the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths combined compared to 60% nationally and 19% were at 'Greater Depth' in all 3 subjects compared to 8% nationally.



There were a number of significant improvements with regards IT in school. A new server was installed and an upgraded support package put in place. With the support of Cllr



Jane Fleming we were able to access some funding to facilitate 15 new Chromebooks for children to use in school. Our website was updated and every day we see more added to it to capture our vibrant school community. <https://www.woodhamwalterschool.co.uk/>



This year we have enjoyed sporting opportunities with our Sports Coach, Mr Marks. Mr Marks has been delivering PE lessons during class time as well as taking children for extra curricular activity such as Multi-sports. Children have competed in a number of inter school competitions including Dodgeball and Football.



We have been delighted to be able to offer school meals that we are really proud of. Our catering team provide delicious school meals on a daily basis and this has been facilitated by investment in an improved school kitchen including new refrigerators and servery.

Last year 88% of our Year 6 pupils achieved the expected standard in reading compared to 73% nationally. The school has had a strong focus on reading with children working hard in their phonics lessons and the creation of a library space in school.



We continue to pursue opportunities for our children to be involved in that are memorable experiences. Some children performed at the Royal Albert Hall as part of a massed choir, raising much needed funds for Barnardos. Year 6 pupils went on their annual residential to Hilltop Outdoor Centre. Year 3/4 pupils and school councillors supported the Essex Wildlife Trust in planting hedgerow in the local area to make wildlife corridors.



Woodham Walter Primary School—Philip Brown



All of these things contribute to a rich fabric of school life, despite the challenges that I mentioned earlier.

School budgets have never been more under pressure and this is particularly the case in small schools. Indeed so much so that the federation the school had hoped to formalise with two other partner schools had to be abandoned as it was



no longer financially sustainable and the model of Executive Headteacher can no longer be facilitated.

However as is the case with many schools at the moment Woodham Walter continues to flex and adapt and we are confident that as we move into another financial year we will



continue to provide a rich learning experience in which as ever we put the children at the forefront of our minds in every decision we take.



U Fest

16TH AUGUST 2024
PROMENADE PARK, MALDON
 11AM - 4PM

ACTIVITIES MUSIC PHYSICAL & MENTAL WELL-BEING FAMILY FRIENDLY

U FEST

FESTIVAL OF COMMUNITY & WELLBEING
 ALL ABOUT U

FREE ENTRY

UFest is a free all-day community festival that celebrates everything that makes life worth living.

Live Music : Groove to the beats of local bands and artists

Arts & Performances: Immerse yourself in creativity and expression

Activities: Get active, learn new skills and maybe even discover a new hobby.

Community Connections: Connect with local groups, services, and businesses

Community Agents

Part of the Essex Wellbeing Service

Community Agents provide support to individuals in order to maintain independence living in their own home. We can help anybody over the age of 18 that is in particular need of a home visit in order to source the support needed.

Community Agents can assist with:

- Equipment**
- Blue Badges & Bus Passes**
- Benefits**
- Social Opportunities**
- Transport**
- Meals & Shopping**
- Carers Support**

To refer yourself, family member, friend or neighbour to Community Agents.

Please call EWS direct 0300 303 9988

Please note you must have the person you are referring's permission. Lines open Monday to Friday 8am-7pm and Saturday 10am-2pm.



Smoke Alarms Save Lives

We recommend that each floor of your home has a working alarm fitted. These should be tested regularly and batteries replaced if necessary.

We provide smoke alarms free of charge to all Essex residents, via our Home Safety/Safe and Well Service. To keep you and your family safe from fire, contact us today:

Call: 0300 303 0088

Email: home.safety@essex-fire.gov.uk

Online: www.essex-fire.gov.uk/Book



Wood Corner Caravan Site - Paul Ashworth



The Essex Countywide Traveller Unit (ECTU) is a partnership of Essex County Council, local councils, Essex Fire and Rescue Service and Essex Police. Together, we support Gypsies and Travellers to access services, including:

- supporting children into school and further education
- health services
- site and home fire safety visits

We manage unauthorised encampments on ECTU Partner land, and the 12 local authority sites for Gypsies and Travellers.

Nothing really remarkable has happened over the last year at Wood Corner.

Stuart Metcalf. Remains the site manager and visits regularly.

Representatives from the Parish Council and village campaign group were pleased to visit Wood Corner to carry out consultations with residents with regards to the Minerals Local Plan.

Paul Ashworth, Wellbeing, Place & Communities Lead, ECC

The Woodham Walter VDS describes Wood Corner as a 1990's constructed 20 pitch Traveller Site, enclosed by tall hedgerows and surrounded by arable fields. It is located on Old London Road at its junction with Curling Tye Lane on the eastern boundary of the Parish. The entrance to the site is very well kept with mown greenswathe.

Woodham Walter Common - Volunteer Warden, Chris Wheadon



Essex
Wildlife Trust

I'm pleased to report that this past year has had a number (10) of very well attended Work Parties, consequently a lot of essential Conservation work has been achieved and on target in respect of the overall Management plan for the Reserve.



PICTURE ABOVE SHOWS INVASIVE BRACKEN



PICTURE ABOVE SHOW THE AREA CLEARED OF BRACKEN

PATHS: Despite the “dry” Summer, the Autumn and Winter rain has made many routes very wet at the moment..

BOGS:- Both bogs remain healthy despite the prolonged Summer dry spell, as the recent wet Winter proving beneficial.

HEATHS:-
“New Heath The area remains looking very good, the hard work last year by Work Parties, certainly paid dividends
“Rowan Hollow” Thanks again to our very hard working Volunteers, and many days of work by Catriona and myself, we have controlled the invasive Bracken

which is helping promote the growth of a healthy population of self seeded Heather.

“Bridleway Heather” We have successfully cleared two areas, one on either side of the Bridleway from Common Lane, my personal thanks to a very dedicated Work party clearing, invasive Bracken, encroaching Birch and some pretty large and “unfriendly” Holly Trees. (See the “before” and “after” pictures above).

HIMALAYAN BALSAM As per last Year's Report it is interesting to see the trend of growth by recording the number of plants removed each year. **2020 155 2021 11 2022 150 2023 280** so we can see an increase, which must be due to seeding, that is why this Year we removed the plants earlier whilst just coming into flower prior to seeding, next Year? Did it work?

OTHER MATTERS **New Ride:-** This has established well, and we have not had any further issues with quad bikes or motorcycles..

NEW NATURE TRAIL:- Great news! A new Nature Trail has been created, it starts in Runsell Lane in Danbury, it is approx 3 km. in length, incorporating part of Woodham Walter Common fully waymarked with Orange Decals throughout, so you can join and leave it wherever you choose. We have installed information boards at points of interest along the route providing greater detail of flora/fauna at those particular points.

BATS This is very exciting! The Essex Bat Group has been surveying areas of Woodham Walter Common, and have found the Reserve has **Barbastelle Bats, which are one of the rarest mammals in the U.K.** They are hopeful of finding a Maternity Roost this coming year which will be really exciting to know if they are breeding on our Site.

New Management Plan A new Management Plan is being drafted for The Danbury Ridge Reserves which will look to further develop The Ridge to improve the natural Biodiversity of these outstanding Sites.

THIS IS OUR RESERVE, IF YOU ARE REASONABLY FIT AND CAN SPARE A FEW HOURS TO VOLUNTEER PLEASE CONTACT ME

Chris Wheadon. (Volunteer Warden)
01245 225340



Waste & Recycling

Maldon District Council will supply an annual delivery of recycling sacks to households during May/June.

We will have a stock of pink and green bags at the Annual Parish Meeting on Tuesday 16th April at 7pm in Woodham Walter Village Hall and we also have them available for collection at the **Walter's Third Thursday Café's**



The Parish Clerk keeps a small stock for residents of Woodham Walter. If you need additional supplies of pink recycling sacks or food caddy liners they can be obtained by contacting the Parish Clerk, preferably by email: parishclerk@woodhamwalter-pc.gov.uk or telephone 01245 373686.

Other recycling facilities in the village:

Glass bottles – Bunsay Downs Car Park, Little Baddow Road, Woodham Walter, CM9 6RU

Clothes & Textiles – Woodham Walter Primary School, The Street, Woodham Walter, CM9 6RF

MY COLLECTION CHECKLIST:

- Out for collection on the right day by 7am
- All waste is in the bin with the lid shut
- Pink recycling sacks are securely tied and do not contain any contamination
- All cardboard kept dry in pink recycling sacks

BY 7AM

suez MALDON DISTRICT COUNCIL
working in partnership

IMPORTANT CHANGES

at your recycling centres

From 13 March 2023, bookings will be required to visit an Essex County Council recycling centre in any vehicle.

For full details, visit [loveessex.org/bookings](https://www.loveessex.org/bookings)

Essex County Council
Recycling and Waste

To book a slot at Maldon Recycling Centre visit: <https://www.loveessex.org/news-and-ideas/recycling-centre-bookings/>

Woodham Walter Parish Council - Party Tents for Hire

Party Tents For Hire



8m x 4m White

Party Tents

£50 for one £75 for two

For bookings contact

Parish Clerk: Jacky Bannerman

01245 373686 (Mon-Fri before 6pm)

parishclerk@woodhamwalter-pc.gov.uk

Woodham Walter Parish Council - Youth Volunteer



Woodham Walter Parish Council are pleased to continue to engage the services of youth volunteers which has proved to be of great value to the village.



Volunteering is all about making a difference to other people's lives and using your skills and experience to help your local community.

This would suit the volunteering section of the Duke of Edinburgh Award or Scout/Guide Awards

Commitment: To visit Bell Meadow/Memorial Garden on a weekly basis to carry out tree/hedge watering and litter picking duties—so far this year our volunteer has also re-varnished the notice-board and helped plant the new hedging plants. There's plenty to do.

For more information apply to: parishclerk@woodhamwalter-pc.gov.uk

Woodham Walter Litter Pick



Woodham Walter Parish Council organises an annual litter pick in February.

There were 14 volunteers this year and we were able to litter pick pretty much the entire Parish of Woodham Walter.

Thank you to all of the volunteers at the weekend who col-

lected many bags of rubbish and also to everyone who litter picks out on walks around our village throughout the year.

You can report any fly tips to Maldon District Council https://www.maldon.gov.uk/info/20000/waste_and_recycling/6015/fly-tipping

Friends of St Michael's Church - Gill Orford



The Friends of St. Michaels Church is a non-religious organization which was formed in 2005 to raise funds and to provide skills and people power to maintain the fabric of the church and grounds. The building and grounds are of significant historical value, and its presence adds much to the character of our beautiful village.

The Church has been on the site since 1563 and it needs constant care and attention to ensure that it will remain for many more years to come.



This year we have had a few working parties and tidied, painted, cleared, and swept. We have a working party booked for April 6th, where we plan to paint the metal fencing along the boundary, cut back any dead wood, move some spoil, tidy the cremated remains, and generally tidy for the spring. Always with tea and

cake, followed by lunch at The Cats. All are welcome, many hands make light work.

I am sure many of you have noticed that the clock is chiming again. It has had some gears re made and replaced

and is a joy to hear it in full working order again with Brain and Dave at the helm, as well as keeping a very close eye on the time keeping too. Brian and Dave have looked after the



clock for many years now so a very big thank you to them for keeping it working for us all. The Friends financed this project and will continue to do so whilst funds allow.

We have also spoken to a wildlife expert from East Hanningfield regarding the new Churchyard and the best way to attract wildlife to it. So, we are thinking about hedge planting along the far boundary.



Members of the Friends come from all backgrounds, religious beliefs or not, but we are all united in the desire to ensure our village historical treasure survives for many generations to come.



We can only do this with your help and by joining the Friends. You can sign up to join for a subscription of £5 per person pa. You could come and help at working parties but mainly we just need your support. Please contact me for any details. Your help is much appreciated, in any way.



Keeping Woodham Walter and our community working together.

Gill_orford@hotmail.co.uk



Tadpoles Nursery - Pam Seear



Yet another very full year for us at Tadpoles!

In May the new King's coronation was certainly something to celebrate, so we dressed up as 'Kings and Queens' and had a special afternoon tea party to celebrate.

June came and time for our Teddy Bears picnic on Woodham Walter school field, lots of friends and family came, we all had a race including mum's and Dad's. Mrs Thain and the reception children came to join us and year 6 children came to help!

We had a great time, we also had a sponsored Teddy Bear count and a raffle, we raised money for our garden area, we love playing in it all year round. We do lots of cooking in our mud kitchen using herbs and plenty of mud!

We also have a water wall, we can collect water from our outside tap and watch it run down all the different pipes and see where it comes out! We get so much fun out of our sand pit, being builders, making sand castles or tunnels.

One of our favourite things is splashing in the puddles when it rains in our wellies and wet suits, we also enjoy have a quiet time in our 'communication friendly space' which we sometimes turn into a den, or fairy castle.



In July we visited 'Call of the Wild again' this time we had an experience with some of the creatures who are there, one of the keepers showed us a big snake, and a African land snail he was very slimy!

Also in July we said goodbye to 18 of our 'Big children' who would be starting school in September, before they left we went to school to show them what it would be like. We did some P.E in the big hall, we had school dinners, they were yummy. Most of them went to Woodham Walter school, so we often see them going backwards and forwards to school or eating their lunch in the school hall.



During the Summer holiday we did run a few sessions lots of children came and we did lots of different activities, including going to the new park on Bell Meadow.

Lots of new children joined us in September and settled quickly into nursery routine.

We are so lucky to be able to continue visiting the church, having stories and ringing the bells, we really enjoy ourselves, thanks to Reverend Julie and the ladies at the church for making us so welcome!

As always, we raised money for Children in Need and Comic Relief this year we 'Made ourselves funny for money', told lots of jokes, pulled



funny faces and made funny faces from play dough, we took photos which we are making into a book.

In December we sang some of our favourite songs in the church, again lots of people came to watch us.

Again we celebrated Chinese New Year, the children tried some noodles and rice, surprising lots of parents with their child's willingness to try new foods and learnt about how the Chinese celebrate this important tradition.

This term we have been doing lots of cooking and baking, making cakes, biscuits, soup and of course pancakes on pancake day!

For World Book Day we wore our favourite clothes, the children and staff bought in their favourite books to share with everyone. We love stories and often act out our favourites sometimes with props or we make them like our hungry caterpillar head!

If you go on our facebook page you can see all the fun things we do each week.

As we finish for the Easter holidays we are enjoying our annual Easter egg hunt, looking for eggs everywhere in our garden.

At Tadpoles we are looking forward to the Summer with lots going on especially outside! We are currently sorting out our places for this coming September. If you are interested in a place or have any questions of any kind please contact 01245 222711 or email us at tadpolesnursery@hotmail.co.uk



Neighbourhood Watch - Gary Orford



In 2019 the village decided that we need to improve the communication between residents of potential or actual crimes. We set up 10 areas in the village each with a neighbourhood watch co-ordinator. In order to communicate within each group, it was decided that e-mail would be too slow and therefore Whatsapp would be the favoured medium of communication as it was easily available on smartphones. These 10 Whatsapp groups are connected to one overriding Whatsapp group of co-ordinators.

The aim of the Whatsapp groups is to get a flow of information about incidents / suspicions in the village. This allows all residents to be engaged in crime prevention and take precautions if necessary. Information includes but not limited to:

- Suspicious vehicles in the village
- Cold callers
- Unusual behaviour of individuals / cars visiting the village
- Criminal acts in the village

It must be noted that the person identifying the crime or potential crime MUST still report it to the police in the first instance either through 999 if its serious or 101 for less serious crimes.

This year we have had a few crimes reported including: -

- Dogs badly injuring 7 sheep in the village.
- Stealing from cars
- Fly tipping in the village
- Damage to goal posts on Bell Meadow

From my log this is the lowest crime level in the village since the Whatsapp group was started so I think all our good work of being nosey neighbours and warning villagers of potential situations is working.

PLEASE - DO NOT STOP REPORTING!!!!

As part of my role of neighbourhood watch co-ordinator I receive crime information from neighbouring villages as well as all "minor" crimes reported in the Maldon and Chelmsford area. Where I think its relevant, I will put out a message for villagers to be aware and to take preventative action if possible.

We try to keep the Whatsapp group messages to a minimum however it has been good to see that the messaging system has also taken on an "up to date" community warning system. Messages circulated last year included: - lost (and recovered) animals,

potential door to door salesmen, blocked roads, lost keys etc.

If you get 5 minutes, can I suggest that you visit the Woodham Walter Parish Council website – <https://woodhamwalter-pc.gov.uk/> where you can find "crime awareness links" under the heading "noticeboard". Here there is much information about police advice, crime prevention, cybercrime advice etc.

Lastly I would like to thank all the neighbourhood watch co-ordinators for their work over the last year. It is really great when everyone does a little, and together we can do loads!! – we have proved it by keeping crime to a low level.

If anyone has any questions or they want to be included in the village Whatsapp group, please do not hesitate to contact me at the below e-mail address and I will put you in contact with your local co-ordinator.

Keep them peeled!!

Gary Orford
Woodham Walter Neighbourhood watch Co-ordinator
woodhamwalternw@hotmail.com



Community Engagement Team - Nicola Syder

Over the last 12 months the team have continued to work with the parish council to address the areas of concern for the community of Woodham Walter, which include speeding, parking near the school and at Hoe Mill Lock.

Our team work closely with South Essex Parking Partnership and Essex Police, as Community Safety Accredited officers, with shared Community Safety Priorities.

Our officers have built good relationships within the parish and information is shared to assist us in when we deliver our patrols to achieve the best outcomes.

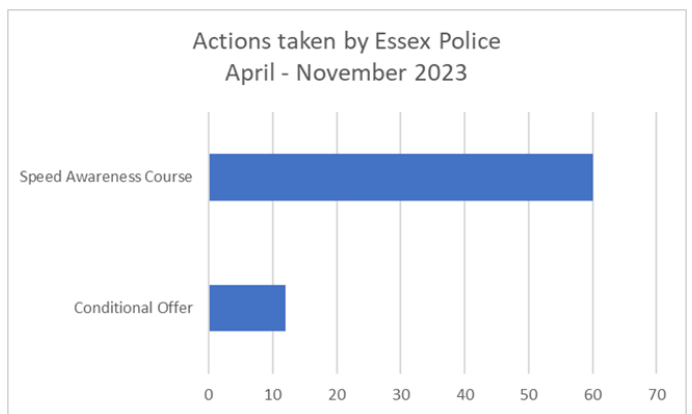
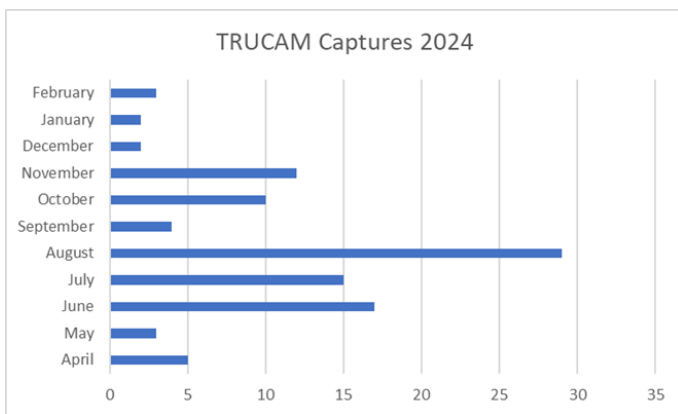
We regularly check Bell Meadow including visual checks on the play equipment and offer advice to dog owners and check for dog fouling.

Any concerns that we come across whilst on patrol in the parish are communicated to the parish clerk

and or relevant agency.

During the summer of 2024 we are aiming to work with local partners, agencies, and community stakeholders to educate and hopefully resolve some of the issues experienced at Hoe Mill Lock during the warmer weather.

We look forward to continuing to work with the parish and community in 2024.



Month	Trucam Patrols	Trucam Captures	Parking Patrols at School/Hoe Mill	Parking Enforcement School/Hoe Mill	Bell Meadow & Playground Checks
April	2	5	3	2(VMO)	5
May	3	3	2	0	6
June	2	17	4	0	5
July	3	15	4	0	4
August	4	29	5	1(VMO) 1(PCN)	5
September	2	4	7	7(VMO) 9 (PCN)	4
October	3	10	3	0	4
November	3	12	2	0	6
December	2	2	5	0	6
January	2	2	7	0	7
February	3	3	4	0	5
Total	29	102	46	10 (VMO) 10 (PCN)	57

On street parking patrols in and around Woodham Walter School and Hoe Mill Lock (Maldon District Council working in partnership with South Essex Parking Partnership) www.parkingpartnership.org/south (VMO: Vehicle Moved On) (PCN: Parking Charge Notice)

The team will continue to patrol; monitor and enforce where appropriate.



Bus Services for Woodham Walter

The village is currently served by two bus services run by Arrow.

The DaRT 99A runs Monday-Friday to/from Chelmsford/Broomfield Hospital.

There is also the D6 which runs on Tuesdays and Thursdays to/from Maldon.

The main village bus stop for these services is outside The Bell but there are other stops on the route—please see the timetable for full details.

The timetable is available on the noticeboard outside Tadpoles Nursery and on the Parish Council website:

<https://woodhamwalter-pc.gov.uk/noticeboard/bus-services/>

Further information on bus services can be found at www.essexhighways.org/Getting-Around/bus.aspx

and timetables are available at: <https://bustimes.org/localities/woodham-walter>



DaRT 99A Monday—Friday

Woodham Walter, The Bell	0728	1144
Danbury, Eve’s Corner	0746	1200
Sandon, The Crown	0756	1210
Chelmsford, Railway Station	0810	1226
Broomfield Hospital	0824	1237

Other stops are made on the route, these are highlights only.

See timetable for full details.

Broomfield Hospital	1545	1715
Chelmsford Railway Station	1601	1731
Sandon, The Crown	1612	1745
Danbury, Eve’s Corner	1622	1755
Woodham Walter, The Bell	1641	1813

DaRT 6 Tuesday and Thursday

Woodham Walter, The Bell	1240
Maldon Town Centre	1250
Maldon, Tesco	1252

You must pre-book a minimum of 2 hours before departure (01621 874410)

Maldon Tesco	1430
Maldon Town Centre	1432
Woodham Walter, The Bell	1442

Other stops are made on the route, these are highlights only.

See timetable for full details.

www.woodhamwalter-pc.gov.uk

Have you had a look at the Woodham Walter Parish Council website? Our Parish Clerk spends time keeping it up to date with lots of useful local information, planning applications and advice, the

Village Design Statement and Conservation Area documents, meeting agenda and minutes, financial documents, useful links and noticeboard information, road closure notifications, plus this Annual Report

is available to view in full colour.

Why not take a look?

www.woodhamwalter-pc.gov.uk

Bell Meadow Village Association—Gary Orford

As a lot of work from many volunteers goes into organising the Bell Meadow Day it was decided to have a break for a year with the hope of being able to organise another event for 2024.

Looking back at the history of Bell Meadow it was really good to see previous Bell Meadow committees had donated £5,500 to local organisations and additionally in 2022 we donated £1,120 to 7 local organisations:- Tadpoles, WW Parish Council, WW School, WW Parish News, WW Allotment Organisation, Friends of St Michael and Danbury Rotary Club.

After the 2022 event the committee decided to meet to document what went well and what were the lessons to be learnt. From feedback people enjoyed the local entertainment and the local stalls. The principal lesson was that the committee needed more volunteers earlier in the planning process and for volunteers to take responsibility for tasks from planning to completion.

With this in mind we decided to advertise in the Parish Magazine and the village e-mail early in 2024. We were blown away with the response from Woodham Walter residents – we had 17 people volunteering their services. We were particularly impressed with the number of volunteers who are new

to the village or have not previously volunteered – this can only benefit the continuation of the ethos of the village going forward!!

We had a meeting in March and I can confirm Bell Meadow Day will be on Saturday 7th September 2024. The final format of the day has not yet been decided however the popular attractions will return and, with new volunteers we are hopeful that new ideas will emerge to keep the event fresh and continually evolving.

Even though we have had a great response we are always looking for more help as many hands make light work. If you are interested please contact Stuart Rushden who is our volunteer co-ordinator at - bellmeadowvolunteers@gmail.com

See as many of you as possible on the 7th September for a village get together and we have been promised blue skies!!!!

Gary Orford
Treasurer

Bell Meadow Day

Saturday 7th
September 2024

[https://
www.bellmeadow
day.co.uk/](https://www.bellmeadowday.co.uk/)



COMPETITION TENT

Watch out for information about the Competition Tent including categories for jam, chutney, flowers, vegetables, cakes and more.



Community Defibrillator —Gill Orford

Woodham Walter’s defibrillator was purchased via some fundraising by the Church in 2019 and it is housed in the old phone box outside Tad-poles nursery in the centre of the village

A defibrillator is a very simple to use machine which is designed to be



used in a very stressful emergency, where a shock is administered. Deploying a defibrillator within 3-5 mins increases the chances of survival by 50% -70%. This is a very valuable asset to our community. We are very fortunate to have one. Along with the defib we are hoping to add a bleed kit too.

Thankfully, the defib has not been deployed this year and long may that statistic remain but is on hand should an emergency arise.

I am a guardian of our defibrillator. This involves checking the machine monthly and reporting to The Circuit which is connected to Essex Ambulance service. I check that the battery is working and charging, and the pads both for children and adults are in date and not damaged.

Should the defib be deployed, I am alerted electronically so that I can

take it out of action until it has been restored back into the cabinet.

The bleed kit when it has arrived will be added to our equipment.

What to do in an emergency

Dial 999

If you are advised to deploy the defib, the operator will give you the access code

Follow the simple verbal instructions from the machine.

If anyone would like any further information about our defibrillator, please do not hesitate to contact me gill_orford@hotmail.co.uk

The Countryside Code



Your guide to enjoying parks and waterways, coast and countryside

Respect everyone

- be considerate to those living in, working in and enjoying the countryside
- leave gates and property as you find them
- do not block access to gateways or driveways when parking
- be nice, say hello, share the space
- follow local signs and keep to marked paths unless wider access is available

Protect the environment

- take your litter home - leave no trace of your visit
- take care with BBQs and do not light fires
- always keep dogs under control and in sight
- dog poo - bag it and bin it - any public waste bin will do
- care for nature - do not cause damage or disturbance

Enjoy the outdoors

- check your route and local conditions
- plan your adventure - know what to expect and what you can do
- enjoy your visit, have fun, make a memory



www.gov.uk/countryside-code



Follow advice and local signs

In some cases, additional higher rights of access or permissive access could exist.

Footpath



Bridleway



Restricted Byway



Byway open to all traffic



Permissive Path

Follow advice on local signs as landowners voluntarily provide access to these paths and choose who can use them. Some open access areas are also made available in the same way.



National Trail

National Trails are created for walking, with horse-riding and cycling possible on some trails or trail sections.

www.nationaltrail.co.uk



Open Access

You can walk and explore away from paths.

www.openaccess.naturalengland.org.uk

For further information visit www.gov.uk/countryside-code

Woodham Walter Parish Council

Parish Clerk: Mrs Jacky Bannerman
 PO Box 12797, Woodham Walter, CM9 9FG
 Phone: 01245 373686 (Monday-Friday 9am-5pm)
 E-mail: parishclerk@woodhamwalter-pc.gov.uk
 Woodham Walter Parish Council website is:

www.woodhamwalter-pc.gov.uk

Here you can find information about the Parish Council, agendas, minutes and other village information.



Who's Who and What They Do

Parish Councillors

James Rushton - Chairman & Allotment Association

John Brown— Vice Chairman & IT

James Bunn - Parish Councillor

Jenny Hughes - Parish Councillor

Joanna Symons - Parish Councillor, Primary School Governor

John Tompkins - Parish Councillor & VDS

Peter Warren - Parish Councillor, Footpath & Tree Officer

Parish Councillors can be contacted via the parish clerk or by email

Firstname.lastname@woodhamwalter-pc.gov.uk



Keeping in touch

Woodham Walter Parish Council works hard to keep the community informed of issues and information which affects residents.

As well as this annual printed report and our Annual Parish Meeting at the Village Hall on Tuesday 16th April at 7pm, we include notes from our meetings in the monthly parish magazine and by email.

All our Parish Council meetings are open to the public and you are warmly invited to attend. Full copies of the minutes are available from our clerk and on our website.

www.woodhamwalter-pc.gov.uk

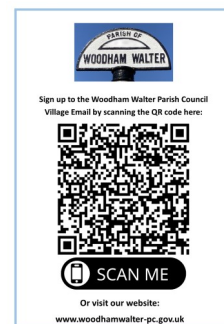
As well as this we provide information on the noticeboard outside Tadpoles Nursery and there is lots of other information on our website.

Parish Council Meetings

Woodham Walter Parish Council usually meets on the second Monday of the month, usually at the Women's Club room, Top Road. Members of the public are very welcome to attend and can address the council on agenda items or any issues relevant to Woodham Walter. The agenda for the meeting is displayed on the noticeboard outside Tadpoles Nursery and on the website during the week preceding the meeting:

Diary Dates 2024/2025

Monday 8th April 2024 8pm
 Tuesday 16 April 2024 7pm Annual Parish Meeting VH
 Monday 13th May 2024 8pm (includes AGM)
 Monday 10th June 2024 8pm
 Monday 8th July 2024 8pm
 August—we only meet if there are urgent matters
 Monday 9th September 2024 8pm
 Monday 14th October 2024 8pm
 Monday 11th November 2024 8pm
 Monday 9th December 2024 8pm
 Monday 13th January 2025 8pm
 Monday 10th February 2025 8pm
 Monday 10th March 2025 8pm



Our clerk sends out an email with any particular news which is relevant to the village. To be included on the group village email for such information scan the QR code above with your mobile phone or visit our website to sign up. Don't worry there aren't too many emails and you can unsubscribe at any time!