

MINUTES

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Woodham Walter Parish Council.

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

Monday 10th February 2025

Present:

Cllr. John Brown (Chairman)
Cllr. James Rushton
Cllr. Emel Fowler
Cllr. Joanna Symons
Cllr. John Tompkins
Cllr. Peter Warren

Others: Jacky Bannerman (Parish Clerk)
District Cllr. Simon Morgan (in attendance 8.00-9.30pm)
County Cllr. Jane Fleming (in attendance 8.50-9.30pm)

Public: None

3344. Welcome Cllr. Brown welcomed those present to the meeting.

3345. To report, approve and record apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr. James Bunn and District Councillor Mark Durham.

3346. Disclosure of Interests/Consideration of Dispensations

3346.1 To disclose the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs), Other Registerable Interests (ORIs), or Non-Registerable Interests (NRIs) relating to items of business on the agenda having regard the Code of Conduct for Members. (Members were reminded they are also required to disclose any such interests as soon as they become aware should the need arise throughout the meeting).

There were no interests declared.

3346.2 To adopt Dispensation Guidance Note.

After discussion and minor amendments Cllr. John Tompkins proposed, Cllr. Peter Warren seconded that the updated Guidance Note be adopted. All councillors in agreement.

RESOLVED to adopt the updated Dispensation Guidance Note.

3346.3 To consider requests for dispensations.

None received.

3347. Public Forum There were no members of the public present.

3348. To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 13th January 2025.

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

3349. Matters Arising - Progress report (not for resolution)

3349.1 The report compiled by the Clerk was not available and the clerk will investigate syncing issues. Matters for report are contained within the agenda.

3350. Planning – APPLICATIONS RECEIVED (for consideration or report)

3350.1 25/00032/LDP 2 Hawkins Farm Cottages, Little Baddow Road

Claim for lawful development certificate for proposed loft conversion, including flat-roof dormer to the rear elevation.

It was noted that due to the MDC deadline and the similarity to previous application, the response was delegated to the clerk and a response sent to recommend refusal and comment regarding the poor design of the application with the only mitigation being that it is at the rear of the property. The full width makes it look out of balance with the rest of the structure and it does not conform with the design requirements of the Woodham Walter Village Design Statement.

3350.2 24/01014/OUTM Land south of Maldon Road, Danbury

Outline application with all matters reserved except for access for the erection of up to 72 dwellings with associated infrastructure.

It was noted that the site is within the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan however this Parish Council will write with objections to the application.

RESOLVED to write with objections with regards to increased traffic movements including that the suggested route for access to the A12 North would be through Woodham Walter which is considered completely unacceptable. Hoe Mill

Bridge is weak and the subject of width restrictions and the roads too narrow for further traffic through our rural village. Also to raise concerns that egress onto the A414 at Runsell Green will be severely impacted by additional traffic, which would make an already busy road junction even more difficult for Woodham Walter residents. Medical, dental and other facilities are already overstretched and additional housing will therefore have detrimental impact on local residents access to these services.

3350.3 There were no further planning applications.

3351. Planning – DECISIONS (for consideration or report)

3351.1 24/00870/HOUSE & 24/00871/LBC The Shrubby, Curling Tye Lane APPROVE

Single storey garden room to rear, replacement porch, alterations to windows on north elevation and removal of existing rooflight with addition of new rooflight. Insertion of two new dormer windows, removal of flue with internal alterations to found floor kitchen and sitting room and to first floor bedrooms and bathrooms.

3351.2 24/00898/LDP 2 Hawkins Farm Cottages REFUSE

Claim for lawful development certificate for a proposed rear flat roof dormer.

3351.3 24/00961/PACUAR Highfields, Bassetts Lane REFUSE

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

(WWPC response: Comment 14/01/25)

3351.4 Decisions Awaited

a) 24/00997/HOUSE Little London House, Little London Lane (WWPC Response: Object 31/01/25)

b) 24/01001/HOUSE Little London House, Little London Lane (WWPC Response: Object 31/01/25)

c) 24/00996 & 10006/VAR Little London House, Little London Lane (WWPC Response: Support 31/01/25)

3351.4 Appeal Decisions Awaited

a) 23/00154/LDE Annexe at Guys Farm, Manor Road

WWPC Response: No Comment

Remains outstanding – Final comments April 2024

3352. Other Planning Matters /Other MDC Matters (for consideration or report)

3352.1 Enforcement – To consider any updates received.

It was noted that no updates had been received for several months.

RESOLVED the Clerk to request updates by the next meeting or the council will write to the new Chief Executive to convey continued concerns about the service.

3352.2 Woodham Walter Neighbourhood Plan - Cllr. John Tompkins

a) Grant Application - update.

It was reported that the grant application had been successful. A grant of £2524 had been received which will be used for:

- Housing Needs Assessment
- Other associated costs e.g. hire of room/hall, printing costs etc

b) General Update and Report following meeting of steering group

- Presentation given at Walter's Café. Plan to attend future Café's with information.
- More volunteers are required, tasks are many and varied, including help needed to stuff envelopes and deliver surveys to research and analysis of various subject headings.
- Attended a webinar provided by Scribe accounting with information on digital communications.
- Onedrive folder created, sharing links to be looked at.
- Meeting with Head Teacher had been useful. The school are supportive and will assist in consultation/responses with children.
- Some concerns remain at the impact of Devolution but it was felt that having something in place, even if emerging, would be a useful tool.
- RCCE (Rural Community Council of Essex) instructed to carry out Housing Needs Assessment. It is hoped that this will be actioned very soon. It will consist of a paper version being delivered to each property in the parish with a reply paid envelope. The survey will also be available electronically (the best way to respond). RCCE will carry out the analysis of the survey and present a confidential report to the Steering Committee/Parish Council. All personal information provided by respondents is anonymous and remains confidential to RCCE.
- History – volunteer is working on this topic.
- Local Businesses Review and Survey – a volunteer is working on this topic.
- Logistics and Transport – Await response from volunteer
- Sustainability – a volunteer is working on this topic

- Digital and Other Communications – a volunteer is working on this, including posters, emails, whatsapp and other social media. The Parish Council website will also be utilised.
- Outreach to other village organisations is ongoing including Women's Club, St Michael's Church etc
- Objectives document shared
- Various other subject headings still require research and more volunteers are required.
- Further contact made with MDC to keep them informed about progress and see what areas they are able to assist with.
- Next meeting of steering group is Thursday 6th March at 7pm in Women's Club.

3352.3 Chelmsford Local Plan Consultation (inc. Hammonds Farm and Commercial Development at Sandon) Deadline for responses is 18th March 2024. This is the final stage of the report (Regulation 19).

RESOLVED that councillors will provide comments to the clerk with a view to agreeing the Parish Council response at the next Parish Council meeting on 10th March.

3353. To receive reports of the County and District Councillor's.

DC Simon Morgan reported that a Planning Appeal at Wickham Bishops had been allowed for 50 houses; MDC Budget meeting on Thursday expects a 2.99% increase will be agreed.

CC Jane Fleming reported on the Love Your Bus Grant and will provide a letter of support for the council's application; ECC budget will be set at 1.75% + Adult social care @ 2%, total £3.75%; Various highways issues were discussed and the clerk agreed to share reference numbers for reports including the deep pot hole on Manor Road; the overgrown bridge at Hoe Mill; it was reported that the moss on the Mead Pastures path has been noted but does not meet Highways criteria for action.

Devolution – DC Morgan and CC Fleming shared information with regards to the news that Essex County Council with Southend and Thurrock Councils have been successful in the bid to be a priority for Devolution. Currently analysis of what will happen to District/Borough/City Council's is being done to look at the pros and cons of 5 or 3 Unitary Authorities (Maldon is currently 1 of 12 local authorities which will be disbanded into new unitary authorities. A draft business case is being developed with a March deadline.

County and District Councillors are likely to remain in post for the foreseeable future. There maybe mayoral elections in May 2026 and possibly elections for Unitary Authorities in 2027.

3354. Financial Matters (for consideration or report)

3354.1 To receive the Summary of Accounts to date. This includes transactions since January meeting.

Date	▼	Unity Trust Instant Access Account	Transaction Detail	▼	Amount In	▼	Amount Out	▼	Balance	▼
14-Jan-25		Balance			-				31,209.77	
10-Feb-25		Transferred to Current Account (February Debits)			-		1,000.00		30,209.77	
					-		1,000.00		30,209.77	
Date	▼	Unity Trust Current Account	Transaction Detail	▼	Amount In	▼	Amount Out	▼	Balance	▼
14/01/2025		Balance							3,298.97	
15/01/2025		January Debits (#147, #151)					32.15		3,266.82	
16/01/2025		January Debits (#149, 153, 155, 156)					1,213.62		2,053.20	
17/01/2025		January Debits (#150)					155.76		1,897.44	
20/01/2025		January Debits (#148)					81.52		1,815.92	
21/01/2025		January Debits (#157)					690.14		1,125.78	
27/01/2025		January Debits (#138 & 152)					46.88		1,078.90	
31/01/2025		January Debits (#158)					6.00		1,072.90	
07/02/2025		Grant - Neighbourhood Plan			2,524.00				3,596.90	
10/02/2025		Transferred from Instant Access Account (February Debits)			1,000.00				4,596.90	
10/02/2025		February Debits					3,713.14		883.76	
					3,524.00		5,939.21		883.76	

RESOLVED to accept the summary of accounts.

3354.2 Summary of Payments for February.

Ref:	December	Payee	Method	Net	VAT	Gross
#159		A&J Lighting Solutions	DD	21.00	4.20	25.20
#160		Npower	DD	82.66	4.13	86.79
#161		Mrs J Bannerman (Salary/Allowance)	BACS	711.34	-	711.34
#162		Nest Pension (Employer £47.74 Employee £76.38)	DD	124.12	-	124.12
#163		Barclaycard	DD	29.98	6.00	35.98
#164		Topsources Worldwide Uk Ltd (Eslip) Payroll	DD	19.53	3.91	23.44
#165		Woodham Walter Village Hall (Walter's)	BACS	30.00	-	30.00
#166		Unity Trust Bank (Charges) (January)	DD	6.00	-	6.00
#167		Woodham Walter Village Hall (Annual Parish Meeting)	BACS	37.50	-	37.50
#168		Skippers Ground Maintenance (Ivy removal)	BACS	120.00	24.00	144.00
#169		MDC (Community Engagement Team)	BACS	637.05	127.41	764.46
#170		RCCE (Housing Needs Survey) (ESTIMATE)	BACS	1,724.31		1,724.31
		Total		3,543.49	169.65	3,713.14

Date	Barclaycard Payments (January Statement)	Net	VAT	Gross
20/12/2024	Dell (Keyboard & Mouse)	29.98	6.00	35.98
		29.98	6.00	35.98
Date	Barclaycard Payments (Estimated February Statement)	Net	VAT	Gross
22/01/2025	Avery (Goal Post Labels)	22.19	4.44	26.63
24/01/2025	M&S (Flowers for Party Tent)	20.00	3.33	16.67
20/02/2025	Walter's Café (Refreshments) Estimate	10.00	-	10.00
		52.19	7.77	53.30

All invoices listed have been 'examined, verified and certified' by the RFO. Where estimated, the Clerk will await final invoices/payslips. The BACS payments will be drawn up by the Parish Clerk and require authorisation by councillor signatory by Payment Date of 14th January 2025 or as soon as possible.

RESOLVED to approve the payments as listed in the payment schedule.

3354.3 Review of Bank Statements, Credit Card Statements and Account sheets for January.
Cllr. Bunn to review and report at the next meeting.

3354.4 Party Tent Hire- To consider creating a reserve for replacement of tents.
RESOLVED to create a £700 reserve.

3355. Other Council Matters (for consideration or report)

3355.1 Community Engagement Team (CET)
(a) January report awaited

3355.2 Woodham Walter Common – Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT). There were no updates.

3355.3 Chelmer Valley Landscape Group. It was noted that minutes & info had been shared. Next meeting 11th February 1115-1215 (Virtual) Apologies have been sent.

3355.4 Climate Action. Await meeting notes from webinar.

3355.5 Allotments Report – actions are ongoing.

3355.6 Parish & Town Forum – Next meeting 25th March 1pm-3pm (Parish Clerk's 12pm-1pm) at Maldon TC. Agenda to be shared and Councillor representative to consider if they can attend.

3355.7 Council File Sharing/Storage – to consider options for file sharing and storage
Cllr. Brown had investigated various options to try to improve the experience and reliability of the council's file sharing system whilst also being alert to the costs involved. Dropbox (£1150/year), Google Workspace (£441/year) compared to existing Onedrive (less than £100/year as it is possible to use personal account).
It was agreed to try sharing a Onedrive link with an expiry date every 6 months. If this still doesn't achieve a reliable working method then we will try Google Workspace beginning with a free 1 month trial.

3355.8 It was noted that the Government has confirmed that Essex County Council, Southend-on-Sea City Council and Thurrock Council have had their joint request to be part of the Devolution Priority Programme confirmed.
EALC Devolution Clerks Forum – Thursday 27th February 1030-1200 Clerk to attend.

3356. Highways, Transport & Infrastructure (for consideration or report)

3356.1 Various matters on-going as detailed in the Highways log.

3356.2 99 Bus Service – Love Your Bus Grant

The 99 bus service is under threat, without an increase in passenger numbers the service may be withdrawn or reduced.

RESOLVED to apply for the grant (working with Little Baddow Parish Council) in order to encourage use of the bus. This could be advertising in local magazines, leaflet/survey drop to both parishes. Also to let people know exactly where the stops are and how they can pay etc. Deadline for application 21st February. Clerk to liaise with Little Baddow and Cllr. Fleming to complete application.

3357. Local Issues (for consideration or report)

3357.1 Bell Meadow & Memorial Garden

(a) Football Goals – The new goals have been assembled thanks to working party. Works to seek ground anchors is on-going. If necessary new anchors will be purchased.

(b) Playground Report - no information.

(c) Bell Meadow – dangerous branch in oak tree at top reported and Skippers instructed to attend as soon as possible. They have taped off the area and will supply quote /carry out works asap. Clerk to chase.

(d) Memorial Garden – working party to install signs plan to meet on 1st March.

3357.2 Footpaths Report – Cllr. Warren reported that the weather has created some boggy places on the footpaths. FP5 (Little London) damaged finger post reported.

3357.3 School Report

Representative on Governing Body –Cllr Symons reported that at an Extraordinary meeting of the Governors they approved joining a Multi-Academy Trust.

3357.4 Essex Police/Crime Reports/Neighbourhood Watch Report.

(a) Various general reports and newsletters shared

(b) Meet the Police at Walter’s Café on Thursday 20th February.

3357.5 Litter

a) Annual litter pick – Saturday 15th February

b) Fly Tips reported at Ash Cottage (evidence being investigated) and Curling Tye Lane (following portacabin fire).

3357.6 Walter’s Third Thursday Community Café

- Thursday 20th February – Maldon Meet The Police session. Essex Fire Safety Officer (TBC)

3358. Correspondence – Various items of correspondence have been received and shared with Councillors and where appropriate the public via the website and village emails.

(a) Various Essex Police Newsletters	(b) CVS Newsletter
(c) EALC County Updates	(d) Maldon Members Bulletins
(e) Essex Warbler Newsletter	(f) Village News & Events
(g) Essex Air Quality Toolkit	(h) RCCE Info
(i) Good Councillors Guide to Finance	(j) NALC activity report
(k) Copy of email trail from local resident to MDC/ECC Highways re: sewage issues NOTED	

3359. Points of Information/Items for future agenda

- Cllr. Tompkins commented that it would be useful if the PC had a projector. Costs will be investigated and presented at next meeting.
- Cllr. Symons reported that the Women’s Club trusteeship is ongoing but that she hoped to be able to update at the next PC meeting.

3360. Date of Next Parish Council Meeting:

Next scheduled Ordinary Parish Council Meeting – Monday 10th March 2025 at 8pm in Woodham Walter Women's Club.

3361. The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.50pm