

MINUTES

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Woodham Walter Parish Council.

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

Monday 9th June 2025

Present:

Cllr. John Brown
Cllr. Emel Fowler
Cllr. Joanna Symons
Cllr. John Tompkins
Cllr. Peter Warren

Others: Jacky Bannerman (Parish Clerk)
District Cllr. Simon Morgan

Public: None

3425. Welcome Cllr. Brown welcomed those present to the meeting.

3426. To report, approve and record apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. James Rushton and Cllr. James Bunn also from County Councillor Jane Fleming and District Councillor Mark Durham.

3427. Disclosure of Interests/Consideration of Dispensations

3427.1 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 are reminded they are also required to disclose any such interests as soon as they become aware should the need arise throughout the meeting).

There were none declared.

3427.2 To receive and consider any requests for dispensations.

There were no requests for dispensations.

3428. Public Forum

There were no members of the public present.

3429. To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 12th May 2025.

RESOLVED the minutes be approved as a true record of the meeting and were duly signed by the chairman.

3430. Matters Arising - Progress report (not for resolution)

3430.1 The report compiled by the Clerk was noted. Matters for report are contained within the agenda.

3430.2 Declarations of Acceptance of Office – it was noted that Cllr. Peter Warren and Cllr. Emel Fowler had signed their forms at the Annual Parish Meeting on 15th May 2025.

3430.3 Consent to Email Service – it was noted that Cllr. Peter Warren and Cllr. Emel Fowler had signed the document at the Annual Parish Meeting on 15th May 2025.

3430.4 It was noted that the Insurance has been renewed with Zurich

3431. Outstanding Policies, procedures and protocols to be adopted

(a) Action Plan

RESOLVED that councillors will review the document with a view to adopting at the next meeting.

(b) Inventory of land and assets. It was noted that the updating of this document is ongoing.

(c) To agree councillor appointed as representative on Bell Meadow Village Association

RESOLVED that Cllr. Emel Fowler will take on this role.

(d) To agree councillor with special responsibilities for Crime & Neighbourhood Watch

RESOLVED that Cllr. John Brown will take on this role.

3432. Woodham Walter Women's Club – Custodian Trustee

To consider becoming the Custodian Trustee for the Woodham Walter Women's Club

It was noted that Cllr. Joanna Symons & Cllr. Peter Warren both have dispensations which enable them to take part in discussions regarding the Women's Club.

Cllr. Joanna Symons explained that the Women's Club had been looking for solutions for their trusteeship which is currently not workable. At a meeting with Danielle Frost from the RCCE it was advised the best course of action for the club was to ask the Parish Council to become Custodian Trustees in order to take the responsibility away from the group of

members who are currently listed as trustees of the club. A Custodian Trustee is a trustee who has the custody and care of trust documents and investments but does not have administration or management powers in relation to the trust.

RESOLVED that councillors are happy for the Parish Council to act as Custodian Trustee for the Woodham Walter Women's Club.

The Women's Club will meet to vote on this change where 75% of the Membership need to agree. The Club are also investigating their constitution, procedures and policies and considering the best way forward for the club. In the future further discussions may be needed for the Parish Council to consider an enhanced role, depending on the outcome of the Membership considerations.

3433. Planning – APPLICATIONS RECEIVED (for consideration or report)

3433.1 No applications had been received.

3434. Planning – DECISIONS (for consideration or report)

3434.1 25/00383/TCA St Michael's Church ALLOWED TO PROCEED
T1- Prunus – Fell

3434.2 25/00233/HOUSE 2 Hawkins Farm Cottages APPROVED
Two storey side extension, single storey rear extension with addition of sky lights. Relocation of porch to the front elevation. Alterations to fenestration.

3434.3 Decisions Awaited

a) 25/00418/PACUAR Highfields, Bassetts Lane
Application for prior approval for the change of use of an agricultural building to one dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) and for associated operational development.

3434.4 Appeal Received

a) 23/00860/AGR Meadows Barn, Bassetts Lane Appeal ref: APP/X1545/W/25/3366556
Prior notification for forestry building
WWPC Response to original application: Comments
To consider any further written representations.

RESOLVED to write to the Planning Inspector stating the Parish Council's support for the Local Planning Authority's (Maldon District Council) decision and report. It will also be noted that the decision is in line with the emerging Neighbourhood Plan document.

3434.5 Appeal Decisions Awaited

a) 23/00154/LDE Annexe at Guys Farm, Manor Road
WWPC Response: No Comment
Remains outstanding – Final comments April 2024

3435. Other Planning Matters /Other MDC Matters (for consideration or report)

3435.1 Enforcement – to consider any updates or reports.

Agenda item 11.1 held in closed session. The Press and Public to be excluded due to the confidential nature of business. (Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) 1960, s1(20) AND Local Government Act 1972, s100 (2)).

RESOLVED to notify the Enforcement Department of the cases raised.

3436. Woodham Walter Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr. John Tompkins

General Update and Report following meeting of the steering group.

- There had been some changes to the Steering Group, with some stepping aside and some new volunteers coming forward. However, the team still need more volunteers.
- Approximately 25% of a draft Regulation 14 document has so far been developed.
- Awaiting the RCCE Housing Needs Survey analysis.
- The VDS review is on-going.

3437. To receive reports of the County and District Councillor's.

It was noted that County Cllr. Fleming and the District Council provides regular reports which are shared with councillors and where relevant via the website and village email.

District Cllr. Morgan reported that the Statutory Annual Meeting had resulted in very few changes. Much of the work of the council is focussing on Devolution. Essex County Council will submit a plan to the Government in September but it is unknown how long it will take for the government to make a decision on the number of Unitary Authorities that will make up the new structure.

The council has started to see a number of speculative planning applications.

Connexin Poles – Essex & Suffolk Water have commissioned Connexin to create a network for smart water meters. It is possible that the poles may also have other uses in the future. Statutory powers are used to install the poles. However, Connexin are prepared to talk to local communities to seek the best solutions.

It was noted that no residents had enquired with the Parish Council despite signs along Mead Pastures, Top Road and Bassetts Lane.

RESOLVED to ask exactly where the proposed locations are for poles in Woodham Walter.

3438. Financial Matters (for consideration or report)

3438.1 To receive the Summary of Accounts to date. This includes transactions since May meeting

Date	Unity Trust Instant Access Account	Transaction Detail	Amount In	Amount Out	Balance
13-May-25	Balance		-		54,818.94
13-May-25	HMRC VAT Refund CR#7		2,775.91	-	57,594.85
13-Jun-25	Transferred to Current Account (June Debits)			2,700.00	54,894.85
			2,775.91	2,700.00	54,894.85

Date	Unity Trust Current Account	Transaction Detail	Amount In	Amount Out	Balance
30/04/2025	Balance				1,675.47
09/05/2025	Party Tent Income (Inv. 24 #CR3)		75.00		1,750.47
13/05/2025	Woodham Walter Allotments Association (inv23 #CR4)		70.00		1,820.47
13/05/2025	Transferred from Instant Access (May Debits)		1,700.00		3,520.47
14/05/2025	Debits #17 #24 #34			1,445.37	2,075.10
15/05/2024	Debit #22			25.20	2,049.90
16/05/2025	Debits # 26-30			462.25	1,587.65
19/05/2025	Debits #18			180.00	1,407.65
19/05/2025	Party Tent Income (Inv.28 CR#6 and Inv.26 #CR5)		225.00		1,632.65
31/05/2025	Debits #32			6.00	1,626.65
31/05/2025	Unpresented May Debits #18.19.23.33.35)			791.21	835.44
02/06/2025	Clerks Bursary from EALC CR#8		75.00		910.44
13/06/2025	Transferred from Instant Access (June Debits)		2,700.00		3,610.44
13/06/2025	June Debits			2,874.99	735.45
			4,845.00	5,785.02	735.45

RESOLVED to accept the statement of accounts.

3438.2 Summary of Payments for June

Ref:	Payee	Method	Net	VAT	Gross
#19	Printing (Bus Flyer/questionnaire) (await - estimate)	BACS	100.00	20.00	120.00
#23	Npower (ESTIMATE) BILLS PAUSED WHILE UMS UPDATES	DD	69.56	3.48	73.04
#33	Point Graphics Ltd Danbury Focus Magazine (May Bus Advert) PAID	BACS	150.00	30.00	180.00
#31	Woodham Walter Village Hall (PAID)	BACS	30.00	-	30.00
#35	Zurich Insurance PAID	BACS	388.17	-	388.17
#36	A&J Lighting Solutions	DD	21.00	4.20	25.20
#37	Mrs J Bannerman (Salary/Allowance)	BACS	819.45	-	819.45
#38	Nest Pension (Employer £57.46 Employee £91.94)	DD	149.40	-	149.40
#39-41	Barclaycard	DD	228.92	30.22	259.14
#42	Woodham Walter Village Hall (Walter's)	BACS	30.00	-	30.00
#43	Unity Trust Bank (Charges)	DD	6.00	-	6.00
#44	Point Graphics Ltd Danbury Focus Magazine (June Bus Advert)	BACS	150.00	30.00	180.00
#45	Village Emporium (July/August)	BACS	99.00	19.80	118.80
#46	Essex Wildlife Trust (Annual Contribution)	BACS	1,000.00		1,000.00
#47	SLCC Essex (Clerks Training Day)	BACS	27.00	-	27.00
#48	Heelis & Lodge (Internal Audit)	BACS	260.00	-	260.00
Total			3,528.50	137.70	3,666.20

Date	Barclaycard Payments (May Statement)	Net	VAT	Gross
15/05/2025	Tesco (Refreshments for Walter's/APM)	14.78	0	14.78
18/05/2025	Amazon (Gate Closer/Stationery)	143.31	16.06	159.37
18/05/2024	Microsoft 365 Renewal	70.83	14.16	84.99
		228.92	30.22	259.14

Date	Barclaycard Payments (Estimated June Statement)	Net	VAT	Gross
19/06/2025	Tesco (Refreshments for Walter's)	10.00		10.00
29/05/2025	Simply Shredding	12.83	2.57	15.40
		22.83	2.57	25.40

All invoices listed have been 'examined, verified and certified' by the RFO. Where estimated, the Clerk will await final invoices. The BACS payments will be drawn up by the Parish Clerk and require authorisation by two councillor signatories by Payment Date of 13th June 2025 or as soon as possible.

RESOLVED to authorise the payment schedule.

3438.3 Review of Bank Statements, Credit Card Statements and Account sheets for May.

RESOLVED to defer the review until the next meeting as Cllr. Bunn was not present.

3438.4 End of Financial Year 2024/2025

- (a) It was confirmed that through the financial year the Clerk has provided a monthly summary of accounts and financial reports to councillors.
- (b) The Accounts and Bank Statements are regularly checked by a councillor and this is reported at Parish Council meetings
- (c) The Chairman confirmed he has reviewed the Accounts file
- (d) Relevant financial information is available on the Woodham Walter Parish Council website
- (e) Internal Auditor Report –To consider any recommendations (None). It was noted that the report contained an error which will be drawn to the attention of the Internal Auditor.
- (f) The Clerk/RFO confirmed that the AGAR form Section 2 has been duly certified in advance of the meeting.
- (g) Councillors noted the explanation of variances documents which had been completed.
- (h) End of Year Accounts – Annual Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2025. Councillors confirmed the answers to the questions in Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2024/2025 in the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2025. The Chairman and the Clerk signed the form to confirm the statement was approved.
- (i) End of Year Accounts – Accounting Statements for the financial year ended 31 March 2025. Councillors confirmed Section 2 to approve the Accounting Statements and the Chairman signed the declaration.

Clerk to arrange to send the AGAR documents and supplementary information to the External Auditor and display the relevant information on the noticeboard and the website as per the regulations.

3438.5 Community funding – to consider taking over the Woodham Walter Women's Club Broadband Account in lieu of an annual donation. The costs are £28.99 per month including VAT (Total annual cost is £347.88 but the Parish Council will be able to reclaim the VAT). The budgeted contribution for Women's Club is £375.

RESOLVED to take over the full Broadband costs in lieu of annual donation to Women's Club.

3438.6 It was reported that the new Smaller Authorities Proper Panel - Practices Practitioners Guide 2025 includes changes which this council will need to implement in order to achieve internal and external auditor approval for the 2025/26 accounts. WWPC complies already to most of the items however the following will need to be considered :

- All smaller authorities must have an IT Policy

RESOLVED to create an IT Policy for adopting at the next meeting.

- All websites must meet the Web Content Accessibility guidelines 2.2.AA and the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile applications) (No.2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

Cllr.Brown had assessed the topic. Discussion concluded that it is almost impossible to achieve full compliance and unrealistic for this small parish council. On testing with Microsoft's Lighthouse tool (which scores against global accessibility standards), the website scored 92% accessibility, however when tested with alternative tools, it fared less well. The same tests on other websites – even those that claim to comply – also results in varying degrees of compliance depending on the search tool. There is no funding available that could be used to outsource the website in order to achieve full compliance which would cost a prohibitive amount of money for a small parish council. Achieving full compliance is therefore considered a disproportionate burden.

RESOLVED

- To update the accessibility statement.
- This council aims to be as accessible as possible and all best and reasonable endeavours will be used.
- Run free tools on each page and correct errors where possible based on recommendations

3439. Other Council Matters (for consideration or report)

3439.1 Community Engagement Team (CET)

- (a) April report noted/May report awaited

3439.2 Woodham Walter Common – Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT). Invitation to attend a walk including viewing bat boxes. Clerk to arrange.

3439.3 Chelmer Valley Landscape Group. Date of next meeting: 25th June (10-11am) virtual meeting.

3439.4 Climate Action. Information about the Great Collaboration had been shared with councillors.

3439.5 Allotments Report – To receive any updates

(a) Tenant Agreements (await some tenants)

(b) Another new tenant has come forward for one of the ½ plots. There is now just one ½ plot remaining.

3439.6 Annual Parish Meeting – Thursday 15th May (Matters Arising)

It was noted that the draft minutes had been circulated to councillors. There were no matters arising for discussion.

3440. Highways, Transport & Infrastructure (for consideration or report)

3440.1 Various matters on-going as detailed in the Highways log

3440.2 99 Bus Service

- Love Your Bus Grant – necessary paperwork has been completed and we await the funding.
- Bus Meeting – Cllr. Rushton and County Cllr. Fleming had attended a meeting where it was reported that the number of passengers using the 99 service had ‘doubled’ over the last month - and this is put down to the publicity that had been generated by the Love your Bus funded advertising. The funding of the service is now guaranteed until July 2026, although the provider is changing this July from Stephensons to Connect Bus. Cllr Fleming noted the Bus Passenger Group has asked whether a loop could be added to the 99 route that would take it from All Saints in Maldon to St Peter’s Hospital and information about the service will also be passed to Heybridge Parish Council who had enquired about a bus to Broomfield Hospital which the 99 serves.
RESOLVED the clerk will continue to liaise and adverts will remain in various publications using the Love Your Bus funding.
- Survey (funded by the Love Your Bus grant) – a draft survey will be circulated for comment. Await confirmation that the new operator will not change the timetable.

3440.3 Telegraph poles (Mead Pastures, Top Road and Bassetts Lane) for water meter network.

RESOLVED to request locations of poles.

3440.4 Salt Bag Partnership launched – to confirm if we want to take part in the scheme again

RESOLVED to sign up to the scheme and check salt levels.

3440.5 County Councillor Members List – noted that various items had been reported to Cllr. Fleming.

3441. Local Issues (for consideration or report)

3441.1 Bell Meadow & Memorial Garden

(a) Football Goals

- Ground anchors – update from Cllr. Bunn – ongoing.
- Football Training - ongoing

(b) Playground Report

- It was noted that the annual maintenance inspection and annual safety inspection are due to take place
- new gate closer awaits installation.
- A request had been made for Skippers to cut the grass – completed.

(c) Bell Meadow

- Tree Survey – await report. Survey due to be completed 13th June.
- A request has been made for skippers to trim nettles/hedge around entrance gates – completed.
- Reported man hole cover/concrete surrounds to EWS 4/6 and they will attend.

(d) Memorial Garden

- Skippers instructed to carry out works to fell Horse chestnut. Completed: 5th June.

3441.2 Footpaths Report – Cllr. Warren reported that footpaths are now overgrown in places but remain passable although FP18 through the Woodham Walter Ruins is now getting very overgrown. The Maldon Ramblers continue to assist with some cutting such as FP36 (The Street alongside the stream) and FP32 Lodge Farm to London Road. The fallen tree on FP12 between the Warren and water pumping station has now been removed by The Warren.

3441.3 School Report – to receive report of representative on Governing Body –Cllr Symons. The school officially became part of the Canonium Multi-academy Trust on 1st June. Geoff Hicks and Michael Bradbrook have resigned from their positions of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governors and Anne Rushton will take over the position of Chair. Cllr. Symons has applied to the local board of governors.

3441.4 Essex Police/Crime Reports/Neighbourhood Watch Report.

(a) Various general reports and newsletters shared

(b) Meet the Police at Walter’s Café on Thursday 19th June.

3441.5 Litter

- (a) Radiator at Rectory Road green has been removed.
- (b) The litter between The Anchor and The Warren to be reported to Chelmsford City Council.

3441.6 Walter's Third Thursday Community Café

- May Café – a well attended café including the school choir who had entertained with songs to commemorate the VE Day 80th Anniversary.
- Thursday 19th June – Neighbourhood Plan Info, Maldon Meet The Police session

3442. 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/News/Info/Training	(d) Maldon Members Bulletins
(e) Essex Warbler Newsletter	(f) Village News & Events
(g) Essex Sight Charity	(h) The Great Collaboration

3443. Points of Information/Items for future agenda

344.3 Cllr. Tompkins requested that an agenda item for the next meeting be added to discuss that 60% of respondents to the Neighbourhood Plan Village Place Survey indicated a need for traffic calming.

3444. Date of Next Parish Council Meeting:

Ordinary Parish Council Meeting – Monday 14th July 2025 at 8pm in Woodham Walter Women's Club.

3445. The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.30pm

Signed: *John Brown*

Date: 14/07/25