

MINUTES

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Woodham Walter Parish Council.

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

Monday 8th September 2025

Present:

Cllr. John Brown (Chairperson)
Cllr. James Rushton
Cllr. Joanna Symons
Cllr. John Tompkins
Cllr. Peter Warren

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

Public: 3 (in attendance until 8.15pm/8.20pm)

3482. Welcome Cllr. Brown welcomed those present to the meeting. No one declared that they would be recording the meeting.

3483. To report, approve and record apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Emel Fowler, Cllr. James Bunn and County Councillor Jane Fleming.

3484. Disclosure of Interests/Consideration of Dispensations

3484.1 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).

All councillors present declared NRIs in Planning Application 25/00577/FUL at The Hay Loft, Lodge Farm, Old London Road because Parish Council Member, Cllr. Emel Fowler is the spouse of the applicant. Cllr. Emel Fowler has declared a DPI and is not in attendance at the meeting.

3484.2 To receive and consider any requests for dispensations.

Dispensation for all councillors regarding discussion of Planning Application 25/00577/FUL at The Hay Loft, Lodge Farm, Old London Road because the applicant is the spouse of a Parish Council Member.

Dispensation given as without dispensation the number of persons unable to participate in the transaction of council business would be so great as to impede the transaction of the council. Form was duly signed by the Chairman and Clerk.

3485. Public Forum

One member of the public present commented on planning application 25/00577/FUL as he is the applicant. He explained that the original conversion had been done under Class Q Permitted Development rules. He is now seeking an extension to the property which would still be below the size now permitted under Class Q, since the rules have changed.

The other members of the public present did not wish to make any comments.

3486. To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 11th August 2025.

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

3487. Matters Arising - Progress report (not for resolution)

3487.1 The report compiled by the Clerk needs to be updated. Matters for report are contained within the agenda.

3488. Woodham Walter Women's Club

To consider any updates from Women's Club.

Cllr. Symons reported that discussions have been on-going with the RCCE Village Hall's advisor who has suggested 3 possible options and they are currently awaiting legal advice as to the best way forward and hope to be able to update at the next meeting.

3489. Planning – APPLICATIONS RECEIVED (for consideration or report)

3489.1 25/00022/FUL Land at Warren Lodge Park, Herbage Park Road

Construction of one concrete hardstanding onto which a new lodge will be sited for a site manager or an employee or designated contract of the Warren Estate to use, with connections to services and one allocated car parking space.

RESOLVED to raise no objections and comment that it was a good idea to have an onsite manager and request condition that the building can only be used by employees of estate with a residency restriction.

3489.2 25/00678/HOUSE 1 Willow Hall Cottages, Old London Road
Demolition of existing single storey lean-to and the erection of a part two storey, part single storey side and rear extension. Fenestration alterations with addition of rooflights.

It was noted that the planning documents fail to provide a useful comparison with the neighbouring property. There were, however, no objections to the proposal. The neighbouring property when consulted were concerned that continual access to their property should be maintained throughout the building process. They have been advised to write to MDC with their comments.

RESOLVED to recommend the granting of permission and comment that access to the neighbouring property should be maintained during building works as well as access to the public footpath 16 (now permissive along adjacent field).

3489.3 25/00577/FUL The Hay Loft, Lodge Farm, Old London Road
Proposed extension to existing dwelling.

RESOLVED to recommend the granting of permission and comment that MDC would need to decide whether the application meets with the legislation given that the original permission had been granted under Class Q rules.

3489.4 To note any other applications received.

(a) 25/00784/TCA Redbrick Cottage, The Street
T1 – Oak (Quercus Robur) – Fell

It was noted that the application had arrived after the agenda had been set.

RESOLVED to delegate the response to the Parish Clerk. Subject to the Conservation Officer and Tree Officer recommendations.

3490. Planning – DECISIONS (for consideration or report)

3490.1 Decisions Awaited

- a) 25/00524/FUL
Land adjacent Barrow Cottage (and Elwy Cottages), Bassetts Lane
WWPC: Object
- b) 25/00578/OUTM
Land west of the Cemetery, London Road, Maldon
WWPC: Object

3490.2 Appeal Decisions

- a) 23/00860/AGR Meadows Barn, Bassetts Lane Appeal ref: APP/X1545/W/25/3366556 APPEAL ALLOWED
Prior notification for forestry building
WWPC Response to original application: Comments
WWPC Response to Appeal – support LPA and comments remain extant
Appeal Decision: APPEAL ALLOWED (15/08/2025)

3490.3 There were no other decisions received.

3491. Other Planning Matters /Other MDC Matters (for consideration or report)

3491.1 Enforcement – there were no reports or updates.

3491.2 To note any other planning/MDC matters

- Planning Enforcement Policy – consultation
RESOLVED to respond with no comments with regards to the policy and to comment that the mapping access would be very useful. Councillors support MDC's actions at trying to recruit further Enforcement officers so that the service can be improved.

3492. Woodham Walter Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr. John Tompkins

- General Update – Cllr. Tompkins reported that a few more details have been added to the draft document and he is currently awaiting comments from the officer at MDC. The next stage will be incorporating any comments from MDC and then the document will move to the next stage which is a public consultation. There are concerns with regards to the withdrawal of funding by government, however the document will remain as evidential for any future planning applications. It is understood that MDC still have Statutory duty to look at the plan. RCCE continue to promote and support authorities to do Neighbourhood Plans.
- RCCE Housing Needs Survey – it was discussed that an anonymised version of the report would be useful and interesting for residents, but this will take time to complete. Cllr. Rushton agreed to have a look.

- VDS Review – Cllr. Brown reported that on reviewing the VDS, comparing planning decisions over the last 5 years, the majority were in line with the VDS so there is no reason to make any changes. The VDS will be appended to the Neighbourhood Plan.

3493. To receive reports of the County and District Councillor's.

It was noted that County Cllr. Fleming had sent a written report which had been shared with councillors and local residents via the village email and website.

District Cllr. Morgan reported that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been reviewing Enforcement within the council and have recommended increasing the budget in order to help with recruitment.

There are expected to be changes to Planning Committees with area committees disbanded and only one committee for the district, so more decisions will be delegated to officers.

MDC are expected to support the 5 Unitary Authorities business plan for the Local Government reorganisation. Whilst Essex County Council is proposing a plan for 3 Unitary Authorities, Rochford District Council and Thurrock Council are supporting plans for 4 Unitary Authorities. Once these plans are submitted to the Government, a decision will be made and notified.

It is now thought that County Council elections will go ahead next year alongside the Mayoral Greater Essex Elections. Elections for the Unitary Authorities will take place in 2027.

3494. Financial Matters (for consideration or report)

3494.1 To receive the Summary of Accounts to date. This includes transactions since August meeting

Date	Unity Trust Instant Access Account	Transaction Detail	Amount In	Amount Out	Balance
31-Jul-25	Balance at last meeting		-		51,399.03
August	No Transfers			-	51,399.03
08-Sep-25	Transfer to Current Account		-	1,200.00	50,199.03
			-	1,200.00	50,199.03

Date	Unity Trust Current Account	Transaction Detail	Amount In	Amount Out	Balance
11/08/2025	Balance at last meeting				5,030.32
13/08/2025	July Debits #58, August Debits #64, 70, 73, 74, 75, 76			3,147.63	1,882.69
15/08/2025	August Debits #65,63, 66-69			272.85	1,609.84
31/08/2025	August Debits #71			6.00	1,603.84
04/09/2025	August Debits #72		-	180.00	1,423.84
04/09/2025	Party Tent Income #16 (Inv.32)		125.00		1,548.84
08/09/2025	Transferred from Instant Access		1,200.00		2,748.84
08/09/2025	September Debits #77-889			1,690.84	1,058.00
			1,325.00	5,297.32	1,058.00

3494.2 Summary of Payments for September

Ref:	Payee	Method	Net	VAT	Gross
#19 (Apr Deb)	Printing (Bus Flyer/questionnaire) (await - estimate)	BACS	100.00	20.00	120.00
#23 (Apr Deb)	Npower (ESTIMATE) BILLS PAUSED WHILE UMS UPDATES	DD	69.56	3.48	73.04
#72 (Aug Deb)	Point Graphics Ltd Danbury Focus Magazine (September Bus Advert)	BACS	150.00	30.00	180.00
#77	A&J Lighting Solutions	DD	21.00	4.20	25.20
#78	Mrs J Bannerman (Salary/Allowance)	BACS	686.37	-	686.37
#79	Nest Pension (Employer £47.67 Employee £76.28)	DD	123.95	-	123.95
#80-#81	Barclaycard	DD	18.35	-	18.35
#82	Woodham Walter Village Hall (Walter's)	BACS	30.00	-	30.00
#83	Unity Trust Bank (Charges)	DD	6.00	-	6.00
#84	Point Graphics Ltd Danbury Focus Magazine (October Bus Advert)	BACS	150.00	30.00	180.00
#85	Plusnet Broadband at Women's Club Room	DD	24.16	4.83	28.99
#86	Cloud Next (Advanced Hosting)	BACS	149.99	29.99	179.98
#87	Cloud Next (.gov.uk Domain)	BACS	50.00	10.00	60.00
#88	WM&H Parish News (Bus Advert August - December)	BACS	100.00	-	100.00
#89	PKF Littlejohn LLP (Audit)	BACS	210.00	42.00	252.00
	Total		1,569.82	121.02	1,690.84

Date	Barclaycard Payments (August Statement)	Net	VAT	Gross
07/08/2025	1st Money (Payroll)	12.90	0	12.90
21/08/2025	Walter's Refreshments (Estimate)	5.45	0	5.45
		18.35	-	18.35

Date	Barclaycard Payments (Estimated September Statement)	Net	VAT	Gross
07/09/2025	1st Money (Payroll)	12.90	0	12.90
18/09/2025	Walter's Refreshments (Estimate)	10.00	0	10.00
		22.90	-	22.90

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 12th September 2025 or as soon as possible.

3494.3 Review of Bank Statements, Credit Card Statements and Account sheets for August.

RESOLVED to defer the review to the next meeting as Cllr. Bunn was not present and usually carries out the review.

3494.4 MDC Grant Programme – Where Quality of Life Matters. It was noted that there is a new grant programme and consideration will be given to any projects that may meet its requirements.

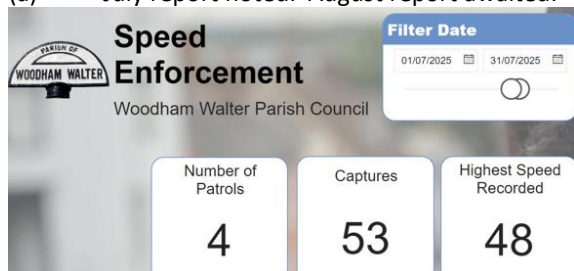
3494.5 Local Government Services Pay Agreement 2025 – It was noted that this was actioned at the last meeting but was not signed and minuted. RESOLVED to approve.

3494.6 AGAR – External Auditors Report and Certificate 2024/25 has been returned with no matters raised. Clerk to put the required notice and documents on the noticeboard and website.

3495. Other Council Matters (for consideration or report)

3495.1 Community Engagement Team (CET)

(a) July report noted. August report awaited.



It was noted that an increase in traffic in July and August as a result of the roadworks at Langford, demonstrates that through traffic/rat running is a big risk to the village and this will be reflected in the Neighbourhood Plan document.

3495.2 Woodham Walter Common – Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT). There were no updates.

3495.3 Chelmer Valley Landscape Group. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 16th September at 9.30, apologies to be sent. It was noted that Essex Wildlife Trust and National Trust in their response to the Chelmsford Local Plan, have suggested a 500m buffer zone be created around the Danbury and Little Baddow Ridge Landscapes (which includes Woodham Walter Common) as part of the Essex Local Nature Recovery Network. The area is recognised for its ecological connectivity and biodiversity value and is central to the nature recovery in the county.

3495.4 Climate Action – There were no updates available.

3495.5 Allotments Report – There were no updates available.

3495.6 Party Tents – Arrange a sorting session – volunteers required. Clerk to arrange.

3495.7 Parish & Town Council's Forum – notes from July Meeting and dates of next meetings were noted. Await agendas to decide if there is anyone available to attend.

3496. Highways, Transport & Infrastructure (for consideration or report)

3496.1 Various matters on-going as detailed in the Highways log

3496.2 99 Bus Service – Since last discussed in July a number of matters require reporting.

- The morning shopper service was removed without consultation. This was a commercial service that was not taken on by the new bus company after they were awarded the contract for the ECC supported journeys. It was commented on what an important route this had been for local residents to gain access to shopping and other essential services in Maldon. Local residents who do not have cars are now unable to gain independent access out of the village and may become isolated.
- ECC have begun a consultation including removing more of the 99 journeys so that Woodham Walter will only be left with 1 outbound and 1 inbound service on only 3 days a week. This proposal is considered to be unacceptable to most people and will further isolate our rural community.
- To consider Parish Council Response. RESOLVED to draft a response for consideration at next meeting. The deadline for the consultation is 27th October 2025.
- Request from BBC Essex for comment will be followed up.

3496.3 Telegraph poles (Mead Pastures, Top Road and Bassetts Lane) for water meter network. Poles have been erected.

3496.4 Hoe Mill Road – overgrown hedge between bridge and Manor Road – noted that was finally attended to on 1st September.

3496.5 Email from local resident complaining about vegetation/rubbish and general untidiness on Hoe Mill Bridge. This has been reported to Highways earlier in the year, and does not currently meet the criteria for action but will be monitored.

RESOLVED to follow up through County Cllr. Fleming.

RESOLVED to ask MDC to carry out a litter pick

3496.6 Beeleigh Abbey Estate – following a delay and further liaison, Phase 1 of the project has been completed. Await dates from Estate with regards to Councillor tour.

3496.7 Comment from local residents regarding junction of Oak Farm Road/Church Hill. Very difficult to turn right at this junction without emerging halfway across the carriageway as you can't see up Herbage Park Road due to overgrown hedge. Also hedge at Top Road/Little Baddow Road junction is encroaching over the path. RESOLVED to report both issues to highways.

3497. Local Issues (for consideration or report)

3497.1 Bell Meadow & Memorial Garden

(a) Football Goals

- Ground anchors – the safety report was considered and noted. It is hoped that as the ground softens up that the posts will be able to be moved into new positions to alleviate the poor ground conditions at the goal mouths.
- Football Training – ongoing
- Football net holes – monitor. RESOLVED to purchase some nylon string so that repairs can be made.
- Football post stickers – to replace stickers which have been removed by persons unknown

(b) Playground Report

- To consider annual maintenance and safety inspection report – the reports were considered, the gate closers have already been attended to. All other points are low risk, minor matters which will continue to be monitored.

(c) Bell Meadow

- Tree Survey – await quotes for suggested works
- New hedging planted in gap after burst water main – replace in Autumn
- Suggestion that the BM hedge be reduced in height so that BM and Wildflower garden can be more easily viewed – especially looking up from The Bell at the bottom. RESOLVED that councillors do not support this proposal.
- The collection of branches which has been put in place by persons unknown at the top of Bell Meadow were considered not to be causing any problems and will be left.
- It was noted that an area of badger poo in the hedgerow at the bottom of Bell Meadow will be monitored to ensure that it does not encroach across the area which is regularly walked. Hopefully it will decompose soon and the badger will find a better location!

(d) Memorial Garden

- Tree watering considerations – await response from Skippers

(e) Bench o/s Tadpoles – RESOLVED that the bench is in a poor state of repair and should be replaced. This will be budgeted for in 2026/27. To arrange removal and disposal of the bench.

3497.2 Footpaths Report – Cllr. Warren reported Essex County Council cutting schedule was completed late July, some by Maldon & Dengie Ramblers Groups. Some cross field paths are currently uneven due to harrowing but these should improve with use. A tree on FP19 near the stream was removed by landowner. Discussion with PROW officer indicated that they do not currently have a dead tree policy. If considered imminent risk to walkers, report to ECC who will investigate. There are 3 trees on the FP19 (passing the Allotments) which are considered dangerous, Cllr. Warren will report to landowner to request action. Regarding Japanese knotweed, Cllr. Warren has spoken to the farmer again who will attend in the winter to dig out and responsibly dispose.

3497.3 School Report – to receive report of representative on Governing Body –Cllr Symons reported that the new Governing Body are due to meet on 8th October.

3497.4 Essex Police/Crime Reports/Neighbourhood Watch Report.

- (a) Various general reports and newsletters shared
- (b) Meet the Police at Walter's Café on Thursday 18th September (although note that they had not attended the previous two Cafes, Clerk to enquire).
- (c) Report of petty theft of food from garage freezer, Rectory Road on/ 2-3 September.
- (d) Report of Hare Coursers on field in village on Sunday 7th September. Reported to Police. Please be aware and report any incidents.

3497.5 Litter – No reports.

3497.6 Walter's Third Thursday Community Café

- Thursday 18th September – Neighbourhood Plan Info, Maldon Meet The Police session. Plus Wiltshire Farm Foods will be attending for a free tasting.

3497.7 Telephone Box/Defibrillator

It was noted that the pads have recently been replaced by the Defib team. Concerns raised with regards to the lean of the box, which whilst part of its character, seems to have got worse recently. As the Telephone box is in the ownership of the Parish Council it is accepted as our responsibility to monitor and if necessary, future professional works will be undertaken to maintain. To allow budget in 2026/27 as necessary.

3498. 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) Other local events	(h)

3499. Points of Information/Items for future agenda

None.

3450. Date of Next Parish Council Meeting:

Ordinary Parish Council Meeting – Monday 13th October 2025 at 8pm in Woodham Walter Women's Club.

3451. The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.55pm.