

MINUTES

Minutes Annual General Meeting with Ordinary Meeting of Woodham Walter Parish Council.

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

Monday 11th May 2026

Present:

Cllr. James Bunn (in the chair)
Cllr. Nigel Barber
Cllr. Emel Fowler
Cllr. Joanna Symons
Cllr. John Tompkins
Cllr. Peter Warren

Others: Jacky Bannerman (Parish Clerk/RFO)
District Cllr. Simon Morgan (in attendance 8.00-8.50pm)

Public: None

3649. Election of Chairperson

Nominations were invited for the position of Chairperson. Councillor Peter Warren Proposed and Councillor Emel Fowler Seconded Councillor John Brown. There were no further nominations. All Councillors voted in agreement and Councillor John Brown was duly re-elected to the position of Chairperson. In his absence Cllr. James Bunn continued to chair the meeting.

3650. Election of Vice Chairperson

Nominations were invited for the position of Vice Chairperson. Councillor Nigel Barber Proposed and Councillor Emel Fowler Seconded Councillor James Bunn. There were no further nominations. All Councillors voted in agreement and Councillor James Bunn was duly elected to the position of Vice Chairperson.

3651. Declarations of Acceptance of Office

Cllr. James Bunn signed the Acceptance of Office of Vice Chairperson form, which was then counter signed by the Parish Clerk as proper officer of the council. All other councillor forms remain in place from previous election/co-option. RESOLVED that Cllr. John Brown can make their Declaration of Acceptance of Office at or before a later meeting.

3652. To report, approve and record apologies for absence

RESOLVED to accept apologies received from Parish Councillor John Brown.

3654. Register of Members Interests Councillors were reminded they need to complete their disclosed interests on the Maldon District Council on-line form if they have not already done so. Councillors were reminded that this should be amended whenever Councillors have an update at any time of the year but needs reviewing at least on an annual basis (usually in May) in order to confirm that all details are up to date.

3655. Disclosure of Interests/Consideration of Dispensations

3655.1 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 no interests declared.

3655.2 It was reported that the General Dispensation as granted in 2023 remains in place until May 2027.

3655.3 RESOLVED to confirm other individual dispensations already granted remain in place until May 2027.

- Cllr. Joanna Symons – Council business/discussions relating to Woodham Walter Women's Club as she is a member and the Joint President of the club.
- Cllr. Peter Warren – Council business/discussions relating to Woodham Walter Women's Club as he is the treasurer of the club.

3655.4 To consider any requests for dispensations.

There were no requests to consider.

3656. Public Forum

There were no members of the public present.

3657. To adopt the Maldon District Council Local Code of Conduct

It was noted that there were no changes. Cllr. Nigel Barber proposed and Cllr. Joanna Symons seconded that the Maldon District Council Local Code of Conduct be adopted. This was agreed by all councillors.

RESOLVED that the Maldon District Council Local Code of Conduct be adopted.

3658. Reviews & Adoptions

3658.1 Model Standing Orders 2025 Update

Cllr. John Tompkins proposed and Cllr. Nigel Barber seconded that the Model Standing Orders 2025 with relevant adaptations made for this council, be adopted. This was agreed by all councillors.

3658.2 General Power of Competence

It was reported that the council's General Power of Competence remains in place until May 2027.

3658.3 To consider adopting the following policies, procedures and protocols.

Cllr. John Tompkins proposed and Cllr. Peter Warren seconded that the following procedures and policies be adopted, where noted with no changes (NC) or with changes as notes detail. All councillors in agreement.

RESOLVED policies, procedures and protocols listed were adopted.

- (a) Council's complaints procedure (No change)
- (b) Equality and Diversity Policy (No change)
- (c) Media Policy (No change)
- (d) Staff Appraisal Policy & Staffing Committee & Staffing Sub Committee Terms of Reference (No change)
- (e) Council's Freedom of Information procedure and publication scheme (No change)
- (f) Financial Regulations (NALC Model March 2025 including relevant adaptations to suit this council) (No change) and related policies:
 - Investment Strategy (updated subject to opening a 32-day notice account)
 - Financial Risk Assessment (no change)
 - Banking Policy (updated to change signatory, add Charge Card and 32-day notice account)
 - Reserves Policy (no change)
 - Fixed Assets Policy (no change)
 - Inventory of Land and Fixed Assets (updates noted)
 - Direct Debits and Regular Payments (updates noted)
 - Appointment of Internal Auditor (Confirmed this will continue to be Heelis & Lodge)
 - Annual Investment Report (Approved: 32-day notice account to be opened)
- (g) Risk Management Policy (Noted minor revisions)
- (h) Business Continuity Plan (Noted update to contact details)
- (i) Data Breach Process / Data Protection Policy /Data Audit Retention Policy (No changes)
- (j) Annual Contributions to Local Organisations and Rules & Guidance for Grants & Donations Policy (minor wording update to reflect Donations may be made by way of grant funding or purchasing of items or services which are then gifted to the organisation.)
- (k) Safeguarding Policy (no change)
- (l) Privacy Policy (no change)
- (m) Training and Development Policy (no change)
- (n) Health & Safety Policy (no change)
- (o) Grievance & Disciplinary Policy (no change)
- (p) Neighbour Consultations Policy (relevant update re: Neighbourhood Plan)
- (q) Biodiversity Policy (no change) & Climate Action Statement (updated Carbon Neutral date of 2050 to align with ECC & Maldon DC Carbon neutral Policies)
- (r) Crime and Disorder Policy (no change)
- (s) Vexatious Complaints Policy (no change)
- (t) Working Groups Policy (no change)
- (u) Recordings at Parish Council Meetings Policy (No change)
- (v) Tree Policy (with update to include Professional Tree Inspections every 5 years)
- (w) Tree Inspections
 - *The Biannual Inspections will be undertaken together with any recommendations as to specialist advice and action required, with quotations being sought where necessary. The implementation of any recommendations will be reported to a subsequent meeting.*

- *Monitoring for Oak Processionary Moth will be undertaken as required and liaison with the Forestry Commission as necessary.*
 - *Essex Wildlife Trust will be chased for latest inspection information.*
- (x) Community Engagement Strategy (relevant update re: Neighbourhood Plan)
- (y) Co-option Policy (No change)
- (z) IT Policy (no change)

3658.4 Councillors consent to email – Councillors confirmed they are happy to receive electronically the summons, Agenda and other papers of the meetings of the council.

RESOLVED that Cllr. John Brown will need to confirm consent at or before a later meeting.

3658.5 Setting the dates, times & place of ordinary meetings of the full council for the year ahead.

RESOLVED the dates of the Parish Council meetings will be on the 2nd Monday of the month at 8pm in Woodham Walter Women's Club. To note that meetings may take place virtually (if/when Legislation allows for this), or in the Woodham Walter Village Hall. Any changes to these arrangements will be duly notified. With the noted exception of the August meeting which will only take place if there is urgent business or planning applications to discuss and the date will be duly notified.

3658.6 To note the following policies, procedures and protocols which are subject to further review.

- (a) Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover.

RESOLVED Clerk to continue making enquiries.

- (b) Risk Assessments

RESOLVED that the Clerk will continue to arrange for Risk Assessment to be updated regularly.

- (c) Emergency Plan

Noted that amendments to contact details had been made. RESOLVED that the document needs to be reviewed regularly to ensure it is up to date.

- (d) Action Plan

RESOLVED that this document needs to be reviewed.

- (e) Memberships & Subscriptions (subject to review)

- (f) GDPR Privacy Notice and Policies (to be reviewed)

3658.7 To agree/confirm Councillors appointed to Working Groups and as representatives on Committees and as Councillors with special responsibilities. To appoint non-councillors to Parish Council Working Groups.

- (a) Woodham Walter Primary Academy Governing Body: Cllr. Joanna Symons
- (b) Woodham Walter Allotment Association: Cllr. Peter Warren, Mrs Jane Weedon and Mrs Sue Cumming
- (c) Bell Meadow Village Association: Cllr. Emel Fowler
- (d) Village Design Statement/Neighbourhood Plan assessment: Cllr. John Tompkins
- (e) Footpaths Officer – Cllr. Peter Warren
- (f) Tree Officer – Cllr. Peter Warren
- (g) Broadband, Website, Emails, IT – Cllr. John Brown
- (h) Defibrillator – Cllr. John Tompkins
- (i) Crime & Neighbourhood Watch – Cllr. John Brown

RESOLVED to accept the listed councillors.

3659. To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 13th April 2026 and the Extra Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 22nd April 2026.

RESOLVED to accept the minutes as true records of the meetings and they were duly signed by the Chair.

3660. Matters Arising - Progress report (not for resolution)

The report compiled by the clerk was noted.

3661. Planning – APPLICATIONS RECEIVED (for consideration or report)

3661.1 26/00260/HOUSE 14 Mead Pastures

Demolition of existing conservatory with erection of single storey rear infill extension and new roof to existing single storey rear extension with roof lights.

RESOLVED councillors support the application which is considered to be an improvement on existing.

3661.2 26/00208/FUL Blue Mills Cottages, Blue Mills Lane
Retrospective change of use from agricultural land to residential curtilages.

RESOLVED to object to this retrospective planning application. The following comments were made:

- The agricultural land is not within a development boundary as per the approved Woodham Walter Village Design Statement.
- The development is clearly domestic in its nature and this council considers that agricultural land should be maintained in agricultural use to maintain the character of the District and arcadian nature of the parish of Woodham Walter.
- The loss of agricultural land, especially when such a loss results in a configuration that becomes difficult to access and uneconomical to farm with modern machinery, would be regrettable.

3661.3 There were no other planning applications received.

3662. Planning – DECISIONS (for consideration or report)

3662.1 26/00133/PACUAR Agricultural building at Gunhill Farm, Stivvys Road

PRIOR APPROVAL REQUIRED AND GRANTED

Prior approval for the change of use from agricultural building to one dwelling house (class C3) including building operations reasonably necessary for conversion.

3662.2 26/00158/TCA Redbrick Cottage, The Street
T1-Acer Sp. Reduce by 1m. T2 – Lex Aquifolium – Reduce by 2m

ALLOWED TO PROCEED

3662.3 Pending Decisions

- a) 25/01014/FUL The Old Stables at Wood Hall, Little Baddow Road
- b) 25/01092/FUL Bunsay Downs (to be decided by NW Area Planning Committee)
- c) 26/00238/FUL Land between Beightons and Barrow Cottage, Bassetts Lane
- d) 26/00229/WTPO Thornberry, Rectory Road

3663. Other Planning Matters /Other MDC Matters (for consideration or report)

3663.1 Enforcement – there were no updates or reports

3663.2 Solar Farm Considerations – there were no updates or reports

3664. Woodham Walter Neighbourhood Plan – Update from Cllr. John Tompkins

- Regulation 15 Submission

Following the Regulation 14 Public Consultation, the amended draft document and Statement of Consultation were submitted to MDC on 17 April 2026. Acknowledgement was received on 29 April after follow-up, together with a request for discussions regarding forthcoming NPPF changes and initial feedback. No approach for discussion has yet been received. Concern remains that the document is now being handled by a different planning officer with potentially differing views.

- Current Position

The delay also raises concerns that the use of legacy assessment arrangements may be lost. Therefore, the document, in its current draft form, will lack impact should any major planning applications be submitted in the meantime. This could be exacerbated by any additional work that may be required. It does however remain as evidence. A request was made for District Councillor Morgan to pursue the matter further.

- Process

Following submission of a draft neighbourhood plan under Regulation 15, LPAs are required to act “as soon as possible,” although no specific statutory timeframe is set for consideration at this stage. The process does, however, include mandatory timescales, notably the 6-week Regulation 16 public consultation and a requirement for the LPA to respond to the examiner’s report, usually within 5 weeks. While there is no overall statutory deadline for the full process, plans are expected to progress promptly to examination, and failure by the LPA to manage the process efficiently may constitute a breach of its duties. The Plan is then subject to referendum and if acceptable becomes adopted as a statutory planning document.

- Changes in Legislation

New legislation on Biodiversity Net Gain (BDN) assessments should come into force before the end of July and there are growing tensions around rural land use, agricultural viability, and competing development priorities within the planning system. The NPPF detailed consultation response and any new legislation is awaited. It is important that the draft progresses as quickly as possible.

3665. To receive reports of the County and District Councillor’s.

It was noted that Justin Jay (Reform) has been elected to the position of County Councillor for the Maldon Rural South area. Once contact information is available the Clerk will send relevant information, correspondence and invitations to future meetings.

RESOLVED to send letter of thanks to former County Councillor Jane Fleming to thank her for her service, in particular her efforts towards the 99 bus and support of the Love Your Bus grant applications, and also for chasing up various highways issues as well as her regular attendance at Parish Council meetings.

District Cllr. Simon Morgan remarked that the new Essex County Council leading party (Reform) were opposed to LGR (Local Government Reform) so it will be interesting to see what happens in this respect. Currently the Unitary elections are due to take place next year.

MDC are due to hold the Statutory Annual meeting on Thursday 14th May.

Local Development Plan – consultants have been engaged, developing the plan under new NPPF rules.

In September the current system of planning committees changes to a single 13-member planning committee.

Concerns were expressed at the changes to the planning system from Government level down, and it remains so important that the Neighbourhood Plan is progressed. Cllr. Morgan agreed to follow up on progress.

3666. Financial Matters (for consideration or report)

3666.1 To receive the Summary of Accounts to date. This includes transactions since April meeting

Date	Unity Trust Instant Access Account	Transaction Detail	Amount In	Amount Out	Balance
31/03/2026	Balance			1,500.00	34,643.88
14/04/2026	Transfer to Current Account (April Debits)			2,900.00	31,743.88
27/04/2026	Precept		34,897.00		66,640.88
12/05/2026	Transfer to Current Account (May Debits)			1,500.00	65,140.88
				-	65,140.88

Date	Unity Trust Current Account	Transaction Detail	Amount In	Amount Out	Balance
31/03/2026	Balance				1,818.55
1/4/26-10/4/26	April Debits (#1, #8)			415.99	1,402.56
14/04/2026	Transferred from Instant Access		2,900.00		4,302.56
15/4/26-23/4/26	April Debits (#2-#6, #9-#10, #12-20)			2,434.91	1,867.65
28/04/2026	Credit #2 (Hire of Party Tents)		75.00		1,942.65
30/04/2026	April Debits (#7, #11)			785.32	1,157.33
12/05/2026	Transferred from Instant Access		1,500.00		2,657.33
12/05/2026	May Debits (#21-29)			1,665.47	991.86
					991.86

3666.2 Summary of Payments for May

Ref:	Payee	Method	Net	VAT	Gross
#21	A&J Lighting Solutions	DD	21.00	4.20	25.20
#22	Mrs J Bannerman (Salary/Allowance)	BACS	1,188.69	-	1,188.69
#23	Nest Pension (Employer £86.31 Employee £138.10)	DD	224.41	-	224.41
#24	Woodham Walter Village Hall (Walter's)	BACS	30.00	-	30.00
#25	Unity Trust Bank (Charges) April	DD	7.00	-	7.00
#26	Plusnet (Women's Club Broadband)	DD	31.99	-	31.99
#27	Npower	DD	50.74	2.54	53.28
#28	Clerk's Expenses (1st Money)	BACS	14.90	-	14.90
#29	EALC - Training Canva (Await invoice)	BACS	75.00	15.00	90.00
	Total		1,643.73	21.74	1,665.47

- Npower query – ongoing
- Barclaycard account has now been cancelled. Application for Unity Trust Corporate Card is on-going.
- Confirmation of Change of signatories awaited. Clerk to chase up.
- Insurance renewal to be actioned

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 14th May 2026 or as soon as possible.

3666.3 Review of Bank Statements, Credit Card Statements and Account sheets for April.
Cllr. Bunn confirmed that he had reviewed the document and found them to be reconciled correctly.

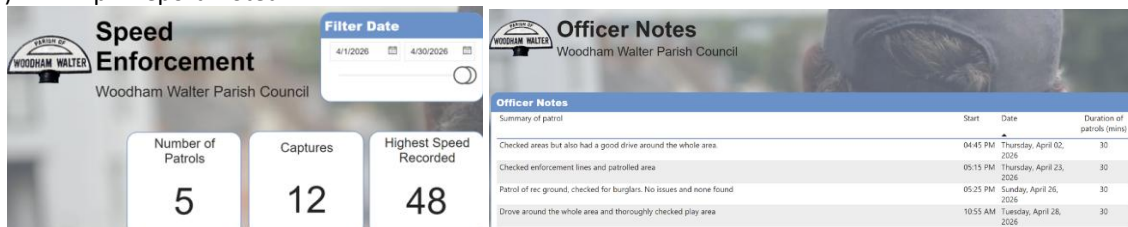
3666.4 End of Year 2025/2026

Clerk reported that information is due to be finalised and sent to the Internal Auditor. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return will then be subject to approval at the next meeting on Monday 8th June.

3667. Other Council Matters (for consideration or report)

3667.1 Community Protection Team (CPT)

(a) April report noted



3667.2 Woodham Walter Common – Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT) there were no updates or reports.

3667.3 Allotments Report – to receive any updates for report.

It was noted that they have filled all allotment plots. Some plot holder agreements are outstanding and clerk will follow up on these.

3667.4 Insurance renewal – noted that the council insurance is due for renewal. Clerk to seek quotations.

3667.5 Annual Parish Meeting & Report. It was confirmed that subject to final amendments the Annual Report will be sent to the printer and clerk would then arrange distribution amongst councillors. Cllr. Warren/Clerk will arrange for refreshments to be served. Councillors would attend the village hall and assist with setting out the chairs from 6.30-7.00pm for the meeting at 7.30pm.

3668. Highways, Transport & Infrastructure (for consideration or report)

3668.1 Various matters on-going as detailed in the Highways log.

- a) West Bowers hole and road closure noted and will continue to be chased up
- b) Little Baddow Road subsidence – noted works due to take place 15-17 June.

3668.2 99 Bus Service

- a) Await clarification on Love Your Bus Grant agreement

3669. Local Issues (for consideration or report)

3669.1 Bell Meadow & Memorial Garden

- (a) Football Goals – Cllr. Bunn will replace the brackets with an upgraded design.
- (b) Playground Report – Cllr. Bunn will attend to tighten the telescope. Some damaged fence slats had been repaired thanks to a volunteer.
- (c) Bell Meadow – No reports, continue to monitor trees including ash with owl box.
- (d) Memorial Garden – Clerk confirmed continued checking for OPM

3669.2 Footpaths Report – all previously reported fallen trees have now been cleared. The leaning finger post at Lodge Farm has been deemed safe and will be monitored. Works are due to take place to replace the bridge on BW31 (Woodham Walter Common).

3669.3 School Report. – Headteacher, Mrs Dennis had sent a report which outlined another busy and highly positive period across the school. Including Class 4 recently took part in a visit from the Essex Wildlife Trust; Years 3 to 6 participated in the Ripple Effect workshop led by Essex and Suffolk Water; Teaching staff have engaged in professional development with a focus on cricket coaching and skills development.

3669.4 Essex Police/Crime Reports/Neighbourhood Watch Report.

- (a) It was noted that Various general reports and newsletters had been shared
- (b) Meet the Police at Walter's Café, confirmed for June.

3669.5 Litter – None reported

3669.6 Walter's Third Thursday Community Café

- Thursday 16th April – Maldon Town Police Team. Essex & Suffolk Water Community Team.
- Thursday 21st May – Community Energy Pathways, Pluto - Probate & Wills
- Thursday 18th June – Maldon Town Police Team

3669.7 Bell Meadow Village Association – to receive any updates or reports. Cllr. Fowler reported that she and the Clerk had attended the recent meeting and that they continue to seek volunteers to undertake committee roles. The event will not take place in 2026. They will attend the Annual Parish Meeting to promote.

3669.8 Women's Club – Cllr. Symons reported that they are awaiting confirmation from the Land registry of the change of trustees. They are currently working on a revised constitution document.

3670. 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 & MDC Info
(e) Essex Warbler Newsletter	(f) Village News & Events
(g) Good Councillors Guide	

3671. Points of Information/Items for future agenda

None

3672. Date of Next Parish Council Meeting:

Annual Parish Meeting – Wednesday 27th May 2026 at 7.30pm in Woodham Walter Village Hall.

Ordinary Parish Council Meeting – Monday 8th June 2026 at 8pm in Woodham Walter Women's Club.

3673. The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.15pm

Signed:

Date: